THURSDAY
April 30, 2026

BENGALURU
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Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Government of Karnataka

Shri D. K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
Government of Karnataka

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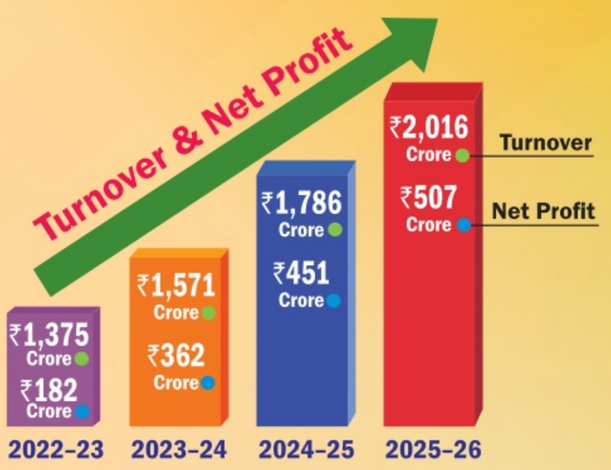

Shri M.B. Patil, Hon'ble Minister for Large & Medium Industries and Infrastructure Development, and Shri Appaji C.S. Nadagouda, Hon'ble MLA & Chairman, KS&DL, presenting Mysore Sandal products to Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Siddaramaiah

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Reaching a turnover of ₹3,000 crore by 2028 and ₹5,000 crore by 2030.

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- Nadaprabhu Kempegowda International Award 2025 from the state government for KS&DL's remarkable achievements
- Best CEO 2025 Award from IIMM
- Excellence in CSR 2025 Award from the Directorial Advisors Consortium (DAC)
- Best Emerging State PSU 2025 Award by News18 Network

Ms. Tamannaah Bhatia, a leading name in the Indian film industry with a strong pan-India presence and over 3 crore social media followers, has been appointed as the brand ambassador of Mysore Sandal Soap.

A big thank you to all the workers, unions, staff, officers, General Manager - Administration, General Manager - Finance, for their valuable contributions to this stupendous achievement of the organisation.

As enshrined in our Constitution - to safeguard public property and to abjure violence is the fundamental duty of every citizen of India.

Dr. S. Selvakumar, IAS, Principal Secretary
Department of Industries & Commerce

Dr. Prashaanth P.K.M., IFS, Managing Director
Karnataka Soaps & Detergents Ltd.

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Centre accused of starving State of funds

BENGALURU
Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, on the occasion of signing an MoU with the Centre on Jal Jeevan mission 2.0 in the presence of Union Minister for Jal Shakti C.R. Patil, expressed displeasure over the State not getting its share of funds under the Mission. » PAGE 8

₹450 cr. released to clear RTC staff salary arrears

BENGALURU
In a big relief for employees of the State-run road transport corporations, the government has sanctioned ₹450 crore as the initial installment to settle long-standing salary arrears.

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What exit polls say

The tables show select pollsters' seat-wise predictions in four States and one Union Territory

B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

WEST BENGAL

Pollster	TMC+	BJP	Others
Matrize	125-140	146-161	6-10
PMARQ	118-138	150-175	2-6
People's Pulse	177-187	95-110	1-4
Total seats: 294			

TAMIL NADU

Pollster	DMK+	AIADMK+	TVK
Matrize	122-132	87-100	10-12
PMARQ	125-145	65-85	16-26
People's Pulse	125-145	65-80	18-24
Axis My India	92-110	22-32	98-120
Total seats: 234			

KERALA

Pollster	LDF	UDF	NDA
Matrize	60-65	70-75	3-5
PMARQ	62-69	71-79	1-4
People's Pulse	55-65	75-85	0-3
Axis My India	49-62	78-90	0-3
Total seats: 140			

ASSAM

Pollster	BJP+	INC+	Others
Matrize	85-95	25-32	6-12
PMARQ	82-94	30-40	1-5
Axis My India	88-100	24-36	0-3
Total number of seats: 126			

PUDUCHERRY

Pollster	AINRC+	INC+	TVK
Axis My India	16-20	6-8	2-4
People's Pulse	16-19	10-12	-
JVC	15-17	11-13	1-2
Total seats: 30			

1 Exit poll results have projected mixed outcomes in West Bengal. This could be one of the closest elections in the State

2 Actor Vijay's TVK is expected to make a mark in Tamil Nadu

3 Kerala is predicted to see a change in power, making way for the Congress-led UDF

4 Pollsters say BJP may secure a third consecutive term in Assam

5 Polls say that Puducherry has swung again to the AINRC-led NDA

Heavy polling in Bengal Phase 2

- 92.6% turnout recorded as 142 constituencies vote in last phase
- Mamata accuses BJP of trying to 'rig' poll at her Bhabanipur seat
- EC to retain 700 companies of Central forces in the State

Shiv Sahay Singh
Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

There was a record turnout of 92.6% in the second and final phase of polling for the West Bengal Assembly election on Wednesday, amidst isolated incidents of unrest and violence. This is in tune with the record turnout in the first phase, where 93.19% of the electorate cast their votes in 152 seats on April 23.

The total turnout across the two phases stands at 92.9%, the highest polling in any West Bengal Assembly election since Independence, according to the State's Chief Electoral Officer.

In the second phase, polling was held in 142 Assembly seats spread across seven districts. The highest polling rates were recorded in the rural-dominated areas of Purba Bardhaman (93.83%), followed by South 24 Parganas (93.48%), North 24 Parganas (92.92 %), Howrah (92.59), and Nadia (92.14%), districts.

The lowest turnout was in the Kolkata South administrative district, where 87.84% of voters exercised their franchise. The adjoining Kolkata North administrative district recorded an 89.36% turnout, while the Hooghly (91.98%) saw a turnout of 92.35%. The polling rate is expected to rise as the final figures are yet to be released by the Election Commission at the time of publication.

The Election Commission has decided to retain 700 companies of the Central forces in the State even after the polling concluded on Wednesday evening.

The Bhabanipur constituency, which has been the epicentre of the electoral contest with Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee defending the seat against Bharatiya Janata Party leader Suvendu Adhikari, witnessed dramatic moments when Ms. Banerjee started visiting polling booths, accusing Central forces and observers of working on the instructions of the BJP. "People are supposed to cast their votes, not the police... Can voting take place like this?" Ms. Banerjee asked, alleging that there were attempts to rig the elections at the behest of the BJP. Tensions escalated when Mr. Adhikari arrived in the constituency. The BJP candidate was surrounded by Trinamool supporters, who raised "Joy Bangla" slogans. The commotion continued for several minutes as the BJP candidate, surrounded by a posse of security personnel, went from one booth to another. At one point, Mr. Adhikari was seen running on the streets of Bhabanipur. A similar situation erupted when the BJP leader visited the Kolkata Port Assembly seat as well.

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MANY FIRSTS
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Strong mandate

Votes were polled in 142 of the 294 seats spread across seven districts of West Bengal

Map shows constituency-wise turnout % (EC data as of 12.30 a.m. on Thursday)

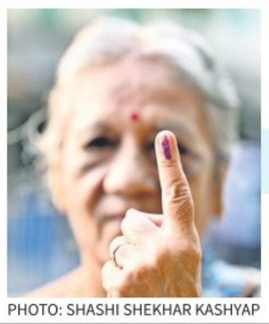
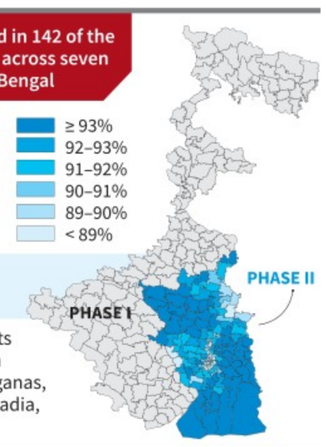


PHOTO: SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Around 93% of voters in West Bengal exercised their franchise across the two phases after a **12.6%** reduction in electorate due to the SIR

PHASE II VOTER TURNOUT **92.6%**

The highest turnout among districts was recorded in Purba Bardhaman **(93.8%)** followed by South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Howrah, and Nadia, all with more than 92%



9 persons killed as heavy rain batters city

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The heavy rain that battered Bengaluru on Wednesday evening claimed nine lives in three separate incidents.

Seven persons were killed and seven others were injured after a portion of the compound wall of Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital collapsed during heavy rain in the city's Shivajinagar area. The victims were reportedly roadside vendors and customers who were near the wall when the incident occurred. Authorities said nearly 30 people were present at the spot at the time of the collapse.

Fire and Emergency Services personnel clear the debris of the wall at the Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital in Bengaluru that collapsed following heavy rain on Wednesday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

In a separate incident, Raghu, 35, a resident of J.D. Mara Slum, was electrocuted on Bannerghatta Road near Vega City Mall around 8.25 p.m.

In the third incident reported from Yarab Nagar, a student, identified as Syed Sufiyan, lost his life after coming in contact with a live electric source. According to family members, Sufiyan, who had recently passed his I PU examination, had stepped out during the rain to park his motorcycle when electricity allegedly leaked from a nearby pole, leading to his death.

The deceased in the wall collapse have been identified as Mohammed Abdul Haq, 52, a businessman from J.C. Nagar; Fayaz Ahmed, 39, a businessman from D.J. Halli; Musaveer Begum, 6, a student from K.G. Halli; Latha K.K., 57, a visitor from Ernakulam, Kerala; Smitha, 47, a visitor from Ernakulam, Kerala; M.D. Salauddin Ansari, 36, a vendor from Uttar Pradesh, and Nasimulla, 19, who was engaged in car works, from Assam.

Latha and Smitha were part of an NGO group who were in the city. Most of the injured persons were shifted to nearby hospitals.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah visited the site, took stock of the situation, and later met the injured at the hospital, assuring them of proper medical treatment.

Addressing the media, he said a preliminary inquiry indicated that ongoing construction activity inside the hospital premises may have contributed to the collapse.

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MORE REPORTS ON
» PAGE 2

Hate speech stems from an 'us versus them' mindset: SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said that hate speech and rumour-mongering stemmed from an "us versus them" mindset and worked to corrupt a sense of fraternity in a diverse society. However, the court declined to direct the enactment of specific laws against hate speech and crimes, instead calling for effective enforcement of existing laws that cover the offence.

"Hate speech, at its core, stems from a perception of difference that breeds exclusion, where the 'other' is viewed as alien, inferior, or undeserving of equal regard," a Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta observed in a 125-page judgment in a series of petitions seeking separate laws for hate speech and crimes. The petitions had also highlighted the unabated presence of hate speech in society despite repeated Supreme Court judgments.

> Issues relating to 'hate speech' and 'rumour mongering' bear directly upon the preservation of constitutional order
>
> **JUSTICE VIKRAM NATH**
> Supreme Court judge

Justice Nath cautioned that as long as the binary of "us" and "them" persisted, the promise of fraternity would remain unrealised, and true constitutional belonging would prove elusive.

"While we decline to issue directions of the nature sought, we deem it appropriate to observe that issues relating to 'hate speech' and 'rumour mongering' bear directly upon the preservation of fraternity, dignity and constitutional order," Justice Nath said.

The judgment said the court cannot enter into the exclusive legislative domain and craft laws against hate speech and the court left it to the Union government and legislative authorities to consider bringing any specific laws to address the bane of hate speech.

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NSO survey shows better health-seeking behaviour, relatively low medical charges

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

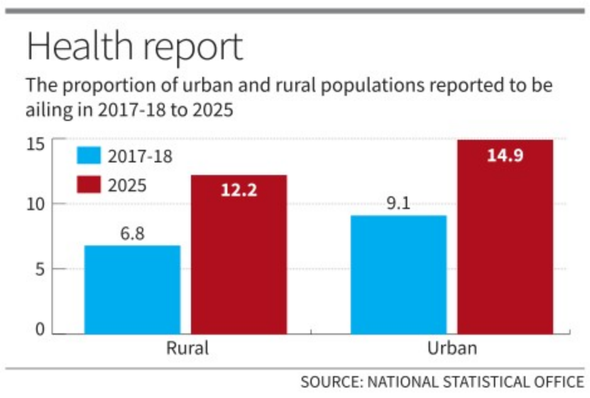
Health-seeking behaviour in India is improving as the proportion of the population reported ailing (PPRA) in 2025 nearly doubled from 2017-18 figures, with rural area numbers going up to 12.2% from 6.8% and those of urban areas rising to 14.9% from 9.1%, according to the latest findings of the National Statistical Office in the 80th round of the household consumption health survey released on Wednesday.

Expansion in coverage under government health insurance and financing schemes rose more than threefold – increasing to 45.5% from 12.9% in rural areas, and 31.8% from 8.9% in urban areas, the NSO reported.

Institutional deliveries have risen to 95.6% in rural areas, and to 97.8% in urban areas, the survey said.

Covering both rural and urban areas across the country, the survey canvassed 1,39,732 households, including 76,296 households in rural areas and 63,436 households in urban areas.

The findings of the NSO noted that median out-of-pocket medical expenditure (OOPE) per case of hospitalisation in 2025 has been recorded as ₹11,285, indicating that relatively low expenditure was incurred in over half of the cases of hospitalisation in the country. Only a small number of high-cost cases were observed to push up the average (mean value), the NSO said.



SOURCE: NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

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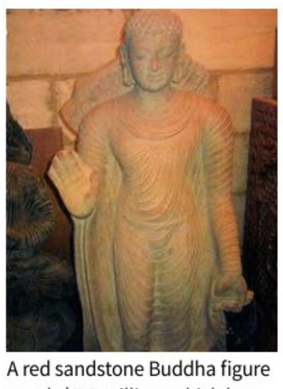
657 trafficked cultural artefacts returned to India in $14 million restitution, says U.S.

R. Sivaraman
CHENNAI

U.S. authorities have announced the return of 657 antiquities, collectively valued at nearly $14 million, to India. The pieces were recovered pursuant to several ongoing investigations into criminal trafficking networks, including those of alleged antiquities trafficker Subash Kapoor and convicted trafficker Nancy Wiener.

The artefacts were returned at a ceremony attended by the Consul-General of India, Rajlakshmi Kadam, in New York.

"The scale of the trafficking networks that targeted cultural heritage in India is massive, as demonstrated by the return of more than 600 pieces today," Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg said in a statement.



A red sandstone Buddha figure worth $7.5 million, which has been returned to India.

Sources said the 657 antiquities were delivered in three phases: 612 were returned in November 2024, 26 in July 2025, and in the third phase, 19 were returned to India on Tuesday. Of the 19, 17 are linked to Kapoor.

Among the pieces being returned is a red sandstone figure of Buddha standing with his right hand raised in *abhaya mudra*, a gesture of protection. The Buddha's feet are broken below the knees, and only fragments of the halo behind his head remain – damage that likely occurred when the statue was looted from northern India. The statue worth $7.5 million was smuggled into New York by Kapoor and later seized by the Antiquities Trafficking Unit from one of his storage units.

Another returned artefact is a bronze figure of Avalokiteshvara, seated on an inscribed double-lotus base over a lion-flanked throne. The inscription identifies the craftsman as Dronaditya of Sirpur, located near modern-day Raipur in Chhattisgarh.

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R.V. MOORTHY

Prince Yadav: the yorker-specialist looking to rule the big stage

The pace bowler from Delhi has taken giant strides for Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL over the past year after starting out with the tennis ball. A two-year ban by the BCCI for age-fudging in 2019 looked set to derail his professional career just when it had begun, but the youngster has rallied against the odds to reach this far

Vivek Krishnan

The year was 2018. Amit Vashisht, a coach who has been running the Sporting Cricket Club for nearly two decades, happened to be watching a game of tennis-ball cricket in his neighbourhood in Najafgarh – a modest town on the outskirts of Delhi that gained prominence on the cricketing map when Virender Sehwag emerged on the scene.

As the contest unfolded, Vashisht's eyes fell on a skinny youngster who was hurling in yorkers at brisk pace. The run-up to the crease was rhythmical, the arm-speed quick, and the bowling action smooth. Vashisht instantly felt the urge to take the lad under his wings at his academy. That was Prince Yadav, the Lucknow Super Giants quick who has been making strides in the IPL over the past year. In his debut campaign in 2025, the pacer from Delhi provided a teaser over six games without the numbers corroborating his capability – he snared only three breakthroughs at an economy rate of 9.85. This year, the promise has been substantiated by performance, with Prince scalping 13 wickets in eight outings at an economy rate of 8.06 so far. If there is one game that embodies his excellence, it is the duel against the red-hot Punjab Kings in New Chandigarh on April 19, where his figures of 4-0-25-2 were at odds with the shellacking that the other bowlers received as Shreyas Iyer and Co. hammered a humongous total of 254 for seven.

Basics in place

Even as the franchise's results have plummeted, Prince has continued to stand out as a source of hope, thanks largely to the 24-year-old's inherent ability to nail the yorker. In addition, the native of Dariyapur Khurd, a village around 10 kilometres from Najafgarh, can crank it up to 145kmph on the speed gun or take the pace off as he deems fit. Learning the slower variations came later, but he had most of his fundamentals in place even before he held a cricket ball for the first time.

"As a coach, I know what to look for in a pace bowler. The rhythm should be good while running to the crease, the arm-speed should be good and the action should be clean. I saw all these things in Prince," Vashisht, who has also trained former India Under-19 World Cup winner Pradeep Sangwan, told *The Hindu*. "He was also bowling good yorkers. I felt that I won't have to work a lot on him. He had all the basics in place. When I saw him for the first time, I was convinced then and there that this is a talent who I will work with to help him progress."

> The thing that I liked about him even then (under-19 level) was his attitude. He is a typical Najafgarh kid with a never-say-die attitude. He used to enjoy bowling the final few overs of a game
>
> **ARVIND**
> Delhi bowling coach

Having been drawn into the tennis-ball circuit by the age of 12 or 13, so proficient had Prince become at targeting the toes of batters that he was eventually travelling to other parts of the country and getting paid anywhere between ₹500 to ₹1000 for his appearances. Bowling with a softer ball had become muscle memory, but when the time came to switch to the leather ball, he was quick to adapt.

"If someone is bowling yorkers consistently with the tennis ball, a bit of practice is enough to adjust to the leather ball in my view," Vashisht opined. "When he made the switch, I would give him small targets. I would ask him to bowl 24 balls at one length, then 18 balls at another length and drills like that. His grasping power was very good. His fitness levels were also good."

Not convinced

Despite these ingredients, Prince's father wasn't convinced. Conforming to the stereotype of a strict dad in a patriarchal setting, Ram Niwas Yadav wanted his only son and the youngest of three children to abandon the cricket field and focus on academics. It wasn't a feeling borne by an aversion to the sport, but instead a reflection of the pragmatism prevalent in most Indian households.

"There is so much competition in cricket that I used to think that it would be impossible for Prince to make the cut," said Ram Niwas, who served in the Railway Protection Special Force and then took to farming after retirement. "But he was obsessed with cricket. He would play even three tennis-ball matches in a day. He was an intelligent kid. He could have been good at studies. His teacher used to tell us that his mind is very sharp. I was very clear that I wasn't going to go to anyone seeking favours for his cricket. I never went to anyone in my own career. Whatever he had to do had to be on merit."

The father's wish was for Prince to get into the police. "Upon my insisting that he should give the Delhi Police Constable exam, he agreed. He didn't qualify in the merit list but just passed the written test. He didn't appear for the physical examination. His mind wasn't there."

It was when Prince stuck to his guns and got selected for the Delhi Under-19 team in 2019 that the 61-year-old had a slight change of heart. It helped the senior figure realise that his offspring must be blessed with some aptitude to reach even this far. Prince went on to claim 10 wickets in eight matches in the 2019-20 Vinoo Mankad Trophy - an annual Under-19 One-Day tournament organised by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) - to finish as Delhi's second-highest wicket-taker.

Delhi's current bowling coach V. Arvind was with the U-19 set-up at that time. "At U-19 level, he wasn't very effective in red-ball cricket. But he was very good with the white ball in the Vinoo Mankad Trophy. The thing that I liked about him even then was his attitude. He is a typical Najafgarh kid with a never-say-die attitude. He used to enjoy bowling the final few overs of a game," Arvind recollected.

Curveball

Just as things seemed to be falling in place, however, a curveball was thrown in Prince's direction in December 2019 when he was banned by the BCCI for two years for age-fudging. For the bowler's well-wishers, the suspension felt like "a death in the family".

"He performed well for the U-19 team. After that, Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) had called him for IPL trials to Bengaluru. Just as he reached there, the news of his ban appeared. It came as a big shock," revealed Ram Niwas, his voice bearing a trace of sadness as he looks back. "He was heartbroken, but he bounced back. During the Covid pandemic, he would sweat it out in practice almost all day. He would come home for just two or three hours in the afternoon to eat food. He just started working extremely hard. He became fiercely determined that he has to achieve something as a cricketer."

> There is so much competition in cricket that I used to think that it would be impossible for Prince to make the cut. But he was obsessed with cricket. He would play even three tennis-ball matches in a day
>
> **RAM NIWAS**
> Prince Yadav's father

Cognisant of the setback that Prince had encountered, Vashisht sought the assistance of Sangwan. "During his ban, I asked Pradeep to help Prince. I told Pradeep that the boy has the talent to play at a higher level. Pradeep worked more on fitness with Prince and ensured that he stayed motivated during the ban. I didn't want Prince to feel deflated that his career is finished," said the 44-year-old coach.

While many youngsters tend to fall by the wayside after such a jolt, the impression that Prince had left on the coaches and administrators in Delhi during his U-19 stint held him in good stead once his ban was served.

"He was off the radar for a while. But the thing was that everyone knew he was good. So when his ban was lifted, it didn't take long for him to be picked for the senior Delhi team," said Arvind.

Prince made his debut for Delhi in the Ranji Trophy in the 2023-24 season. In his first appearance, against Jammu & Kashmir in Jammu in January 2024, the visiting side didn't bowl at all as the drawn game was confined to 42 overs of play over four days due to inclement weather. In his next outing later that month, Prince displayed good control against Uttarakhand in Chandigarh, but returned just one wicket in 33 overs across two innings.

It wasn't exactly an impressive initiation to the senior level at a time when the likes of Harshit Rana and Mayank Yadav were also making headway in the national capital. But before any uncertainty could creep in about his peers marching ahead, the inaugural season of the Delhi Premier League was launched in mid-2024.

Prince turned out for a team led by Rishabh Pant, and claimed 13 wickets in 10 matches. It paved the way for further opportunities for Delhi in the Vijay Hazare Trophy and the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy during the 2024-25 domestic season, and facilitated the transition from being a net bowler at LSG to earning a ₹30 lakh contract for the same franchise ahead of the 2025 edition.

Content as he may be by the change in circumstances, it hasn't stopped Prince from refining his skills. In the 2025-26 Vijay Hazare Trophy, the domestic 50-over meet that was held in Bengaluru last December and January, he effected 18 dismissals in eight matches. He has continued his upward trajectory in his second IPL season this year.

"When he played two Ranji games in the 2023-24 season, I felt he wasn't quite suited to red-ball cricket because he is not the kind of bowler who gets extra bounce. But when we played the Vijay Hazare tournament in Bengaluru recently, he was really effective, getting sharp bounce on those pitches at the Centre of Excellence. The confidence from playing in the IPL is visible in him. He has improved a lot compared to two or three years ago," Arvind observed.

If Prince does not veer from this path, Arvind senses that an India-A call-up in white-ball cricket may not be far away. "He can move the ball both ways, and he is very accurate. Because he is a skiddy bowler, he has a lethal bouncer that the batter finds difficult to evade in white-ball cricket," he analysed. "Given the way he is bowing, I am sure that the national selectors will give him a break soon for India-A."

THE GIST

- Even as LSG's fortunes have plummeted, Prince has continued to stand out as a source of hope, thanks largely to his inherent ability to nail the yorker
- While many youngsters tend to fall by the wayside after such a jolt, the impression that Prince had left on the coaches and administrators in Delhi during his U-19 stint held him in good stead once his ban was served
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Govt. of Uttarakhand

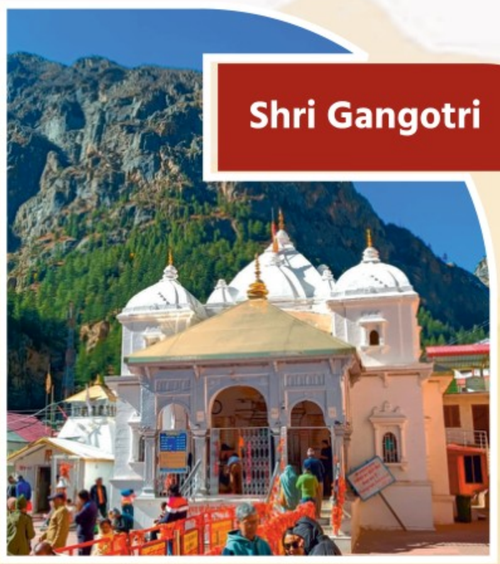
Uttarakhand 25 Silver Jubilee Year
GAURAV, VIKAS AUR SANKALP KA PARV

Devbhoomi Uttarakhand
VIKAS BHI, VIRASAT BHI

Chardham Yatra

Shri Yamunotri

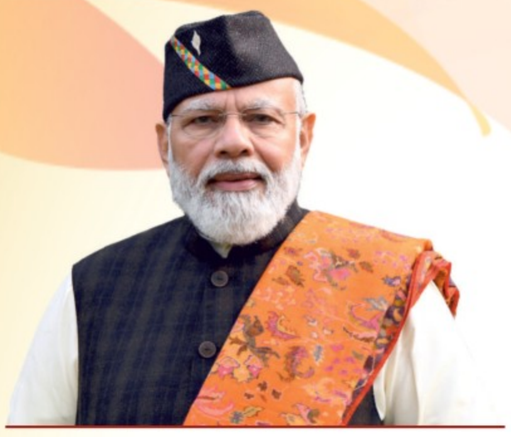
Shri Gangotri



Shri Kedarnath

Shri Badrinath

A WARM WELCOME TO ALL DEVOTEES



My dear Countrymen,

The sacred Chardham Yatra has commenced in the holy land of Devbhoomi Uttarakhand. This divine pilgrimage to the four shrines, including the darshan of Baba Kedar, is a magnificent celebration of India's eternal (Sanatan) cultural consciousness. Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya gave a new direction to Indian culture through his pilgrimages to Badrinath and Kedarnath. Similarly, Jagadguru Ramanujacharya and Jagadguru Madhvacharya also visited Badrinath to enrich their spiritual philosophies.

Even today, these four shrines nestled in the lap of the Himalayas remain divine centers of our eternal faith and belief. Every year, people belonging to diverse languages, traditions, and cultures come here, further strengthening the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'. This year's Yatra is an extension of that very tradition.

Our scriptures state:

अग्निष्टोमादिभिर्यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा विपुलदक्षिणैः।
न तत्फलमवाप्नोति तीर्थाभिगमनेन यत्॥

Meaning: The immense merit (Punya) earn through grand Yagyas (sacrificial rituals) and charity is profound. However, the merit obtained through a pilgrimage (Tirtha Yatra) is even greater than that gained through those rituals.

In the resolve for a 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India), the role of a 'Viksit Uttarakhand' is extremely vital. A few years ago, at the gateway of Baba Kedar, I had said that this decade would be the 'Decade of Uttarakhand.' Today, the progress of Uttarakhand is turning that belief into reality. Uttarakhand is setting new benchmarks in all three sectors: tourism, spirituality, and economic growth.

The great ritual of development (Vikas ka Mahayagya) that has been underway in Uttarakhand for the past few years has made the Chardham Yatra more accessible, safer, and divine than ever before. This is providing great convenience to the visiting devotees, saints, and tourists. In all these efforts, every care is being taken to preserve the natural beauty of Uttarakhand.

I would also urge every guest visiting Uttarakhand to truly enjoy this new experience. During your journey, I encourage all travellers to observe a "Digital Fast" and strive to live within the natural beauty of Uttarakhand. This will provide you with a unique sense of satisfaction.

Historically, we have always traveled from our homes to Devbhoomi for the Chardham Yatra with a specific resolve. In this spirit, I wish to urge you to take Five Resolves (Panch Sankalp):

First Resolve – Cleanliness is Paramount: Maintain cleanliness within and around the shrines. Contribute your part to keeping the rivers clean. Take a pledge for a journey free of single-use plastic and uphold the dignity of this sacred land.

Second Resolve – Sensitivity towards Nature and Environment: Be sensitive toward this divine Himalayan land. While maintaining the balance of nature, contribute to environmental conservation through initiatives like 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' (A Tree in Mother's Name).

Third Resolve – Emphasis on Service, Cooperation, and Unity: Since ancient times, our pilgrimages have been a medium for universal service and social harmony. Even today, people serve pilgrims with this same spirit. I urge every pilgrim visiting the Chardham to perform at least one act of service every day of their journey. Help your fellow travellers and connect with people coming from different parts of the country. By participating in their traditions, strengthen the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' through this pilgrimage.

Fourth Resolve – Promoting 'Vocal for Local': From the time you leave your home until you return, ensure that you spend at least five percent of your total travel budget on purchasing local products. Even if a local item is not immediately needed in this season, try to buy it for future use.

Fifth Resolve – Adherence to Discipline, Safety, and Decorum: Follow the rules of the journey and traffic instructions. As a responsible and alert citizen, make this pilgrimage safe and accessible. Let us ensure that our journey does not cause any inconvenience to the people involved in the organisation and management of this Yatra.

In recent years, a large number of creators and influencers have started visiting the Chardham. I urge all of you to make an effort to share the local stories of Uttarakhand and its small, unique traditions with the masses.

May the blessings of Baba Kedar and all the four shrines infuse your life with new energy, new inspiration, and new resolutions. This is my wish for you.

My heartiest best wishes to all of you for a successful, safe, divine, and soulful journey.

Yours

Narendra Modi

SPIRITUAL AND NATURAL ATTRACTIONS NEAR THE CHAR DHAM ROUTE

Near Yamunotri

Janki Chatti & Hanuman Chatti, Kharsali Village, Saptarishi Kund, Lakhamandal, Kedarkantha Trek, Rana Chatti.

Near Kedarnath

Bhairavnath Temple, Vasuki Tal, Gaurikund, Triyuginarayan Temple, Chopta - Tungnath - Chandra Shila, Deoria Tal.

Near Gangotri

Gaumukh Trek, Bhojbasa & Tapovan, Surya Kund & Gauri Kund, Harsil Valley, Mukhimath (Mukhba), Dayara Bugyal Trek, Gartang Gali, Kashi Vishwanath Temple (Uttarkashi), Nachiketa Tal & Dodital.

Near Badrinath

Mana Village, Vyas Gufa & Ganesh Gufa, Bhimsila, Auli, Valley of Flowers, Vasudhara Falls, Charanpaduka, Tapt Kund & Narad Kund, Jyotirmath (Joshimath), Satopanth Lake, Pandukeshwar, Adibadri Temple, Hemkund Sahib.

"The Honourable Prime Minister has termed the third decade of the 21st century as the 'Decade of Uttarakhand.' In line with the Prime Minister's vision, we are working with an 'unwavering commitment' (Vikalp Rahit Sankalp) to make the state an ideal state in every field."

Pushkar Singh Dhami
Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

Important Information

Mandatory Registration: Registration is compulsory before commencing the Yatra.

Verify Contact Details: Please ensure you enter the correct mobile number during registration.

Be Prepared for Weather: Carry adequate woolen clothes, an umbrella, and a raincoat.

Accurate Health Data: Provide precise health information during the registration process.

Senior Citizen Advisory: Senior citizens are advised to undergo a medical check-up before starting the journey.

Medication: If you are on prescribed medication, carry a sufficient stock of your medicines.

Acclimatisation: Take frequent breaks at various transit points along the route to acclimatize to the high-altitude climate.

Health First: If you feel unwell, please do not proceed with the journey.

Beware of Scams: Avoid unauthorised individuals claiming to facilitate 'Darshan' at the shrines.

Keep Tracks Clean: Cooperate with us in keeping the pilgrimage routes clean; do not litter.

Safe Driving: Maintain controlled vehicle speed and park only in designated parking areas.

No Plastic: Strictly avoid the use of single-use plastic.

Modes of Registration

Visit the website or scan the QR Code:
registrationandtouristcare.uk.gov.in

Download the App
touristcareuttarakhand
Google Play | App Store

FOR ANY ASSISTANCE.
PLEASE CONTACT OUR 24X7
TOLL FREE NUMBER:
0135-3520100
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT
PHONE:
0135-2552627
0135-2559898
E-MAIL:
touristcare.uttarakhand@gmail.com

#ExploreUttarakhand
@DIPR_UK

Panch Kedar	Panch Prayag	Panch Badri
1. Kedarnath	1. Devprayag	1. Vishal Badri
2. Tungnath	2. Rudraprayag	2. Yogdarshan Badri
3. Rudranath	3. Karnprayag	3. Bhavya Badri
4. Madhmaheshwar	4. Nandprayag	4. Vradha Badri
5. Kalpeswar	5. Vishnuprayag	5. Aadi Badri

Use only the official portal for Helicopter Bookings To Avoid any Fraud
www.heliyatra.irctc.co.in

During the Chardham Yatra, you can also visit and experience the divine Panch Kedar, Panch Prayag and Panch Badri. In the Panch Badri, Lord Vishnu is worshipped in various unique forms

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Hailstones, leaves clog drains

What added to the woes of commuters on the roads were hailstones and leaves that clogged the drains. This led to the flooding of roads and it was hours before the water receded. There was knee-length water on many roads, leading to many vehicles breaking down as well. The hailstones that hit the city were large in size and took a long time to dissolve. These hailstones, along with fallen leaves due to high speed winds, clogged the drains by the road side.

A high view: The traffic congestion following the downpour in Bengaluru. PTI

Ordeal to reach helplines

What also added to the woes of residents of Bengaluru was that all helplines were flooded with calls. Bescom, the city's corporations' helplines and the integrated 1533 helplines were flooded with so many calls that it became a herculean task to get through and register complaints. Bescom recorded a whopping 25,050 calls to its helpline between 4 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. following rain-related disruptions, with several localities reporting prolonged electricity-related interruptions.

Bengaluru under the weather

Heavy rain, thunderstorms, and hailstorms brought the much-needed relief from the heat, but also left a trail of widespread destruction

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Heavy rain, thunderstorms, and hailstorms that lashed Bengaluru on Wednesday evening, while bringing much-needed relief from the searing heat, left a trail of widespread damage, exposing how unprepared the city has been for the monsoon this year too.

Just a few minutes of very heavy rain left most arterial roads in the city flooded. On many roads, there was knee-deep water that caused not only slow-moving traffic, but also caused several vehicles to break down, further adding to the chaos.

Ramesh S., who drove from Kanakapura Road to the Central Business District (CBD) through the rain on Wednesday, said it was one of the scariest drives in Bengaluru. "Water levels on the road were high, threatening to flood the car. Driving was such an ordeal. I could see tree branches falling on vehicles. I was scared that a tree could fall on my car," he said.

Another commuter, Salma Y., said during her ride in an autorickshaw, she saw a car in front of her lose control and slip into a sinkhole that appeared suddenly on Lavelle Road. Luckily, the occupants of the car got out safely. "It was a close shave for our vehicle," she added. Multiple incidents of roads caving in and sinkholes being formed were reported in the city.

In several parts of the city, including Malleswaram, Chickpet, two-wheelers and even autorickshaws were partially submerged owing to the intense rain and severe flooding.

An actor's large cut-out supported by a wooden structure collapsed over an auto on Magadi Road, severely damaging the vehicle.

Crawling along: Vehicles make their way along flooded roads in Bengaluru during the heavy rain, and people taking shelter behind a vehicle, on Wednesday. K. MURALI KUMAR

The rain was also accompanied by high-speed winds leading to many cases of tree fall. A total of 170 tree fall incidents were reported across Bengaluru's five city corporations, apart from 408 incidents of fallen branches, after heavy rain and hail, according to the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

The central corporation was the worst affected, recording 67 fallen trees and 131 fallen branches. Within the corporation, Chickpet and Shantinagar were the worst affected. The west corporation reported 55 fallen trees and 121 fallen branches, with Mahalakshmi Layout emerging as the worst-hit area with 13 incidents. The south corporation recorded 23 fallen trees and 82 fallen branches, with Jayanagar reporting nine incidents. In the north corporation, 24 trees and 70 branches fell, with Rajarajeshwari Nagar recording seven incidents. The east corporation reported one fallen tree and four fallen branches.

In a few instances, tree branches fell on vehicles damaging them. Luckily, there were no reports of people being injured in these incidents. Bescom also reported 93 instances of trees falling on electric wires and cables.

Flooding

Expectedly, several low-lying areas were flooded during Wednesday's rain. Balagere, Trinity Fortune Layout, Bellandur, Nagawara, CBI Road reported flooding of residences. Several houses in slums in Jaibheem Nagar, Jolly Mohalla, and Nagamma Nagar were completely flooded.

The GBA said it received a total of 68 complaints of flooding on the day. The south corporation reported 29 such instances, while the central corporation reported 19 flooding complaints.

There was flooding observed even in the Vidhana Soudha and several buildings in the CBD. A popular bookstore on Church Street, Bookworm, was also flooded and nearly 5,000 books were damaged, said Krishna Gowda, the owner.

Power disruptions

Many parts of the city were left without power for several hours. Bescom recorded a whopping 6,869 complaints. Out of more than 6,000 complaints, over 5,500 complaints were related to power outages only, Bescom said.

The rain caused significant damage, with 43 electricity poles reported broken, 93 cases of trees falling on wires and cables, and 17 transformer failures, officials said.

From Page One

Nine killed as heavy rain batters Bengaluru

"Mud was being dumped adjacent to the compound wall, which appears to have weakened the structure due to the gush of rain water. It is also being examined whether the wall was dilapidated," he said.

The Chief Minister expressed strong displeasure over the apparent negligence and pulled up officials on the spot. Questioning the lack of coordination and inspection, he asked, "Were you not aware that the wall was old? Could this not have been prevented with proper vigilance?"

He announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh each to the families of the deceased. He also directed officials to ensure free treatment for the injured.

In shock

Eyewitnesses recounted the horror of the incident. Suhail, a roadside vendor, said his brother Fayaz was among those killed. "We have been selling purses and chappals here for the past 20 years. This is the first time such a tragedy has occurred. I was standing a little away when the wall suddenly collapsed," he said.

Another victim, 52-year-old Mohammed Abdul Haq, who sold clothes, had recently shifted to the spot due to poor business elsewhere. He is survived by four children.

City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh and other senior officials visited the site and supervised rescue operations.

Doctors at Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital said that of the 14 persons injured in the incident, seven were brought dead.

According to doctors, a group of 46 members from an NGO based near Ernakulam had come to Bengaluru on a sightseeing trip. While some members were shopping on Commercial Street, others had gathered near St. Mary's Basilica when it began to rain.

To take shelter, a few of them stood near the compound wall of the Bowring Hospital mortuary. A tree inside the compound reportedly fell under pressure due to the rain, leading to the collapse of a portion of the compound wall.

It's a new rainfall record for April

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The downpour on Wednesday, coupled with thunderstorms and hailstorms, brought an end to a parched April. The city which received no rainfall throughout the month recorded 111 mm rainfall.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) observation data, the Bengaluru city station recorded 111 mm rain till 8.30 p.m. while the the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) recorded trace rainfall, and the HAL airport received 24.7 mm till 5.30 p.m.

IMD officials said that 111.0 mm is a new record for the month of April. The previous record for April (24-hour period) was 108.6 mm in 2011.

Officials further added that the Bengaluru city station recorded 78 mm rainfall within a duration of about 30 minutes.

What caused it

"Strong lower level wind convergence coupled with humidity and rise in temperatures led to strong convection which resulted in the downpour and hailstorms," IMD scientist C.S. Patil told *The Hindu*.

The intensity was high in the Central Business District compared to other areas of Bengaluru.

Till May 1

Mr. Patil further said that Bengaluru would continue to receive light to moderate rainfall till May 1.

The IMD forecast for the next 36 hours states that there would be partly cloudy skies. Light to moderate rain and thundershowers accompanied with gusty winds (30 to 40 kmph) are likely at isolated places towards evening/night.

"Maximum and minimum temperatures are very likely to be around 36°C and 20°C, respectively. The maximum temperature is likely to remain above normal by 2 degrees Celsius," the IMD forecast said.

Bengaluru typically gets 61.7 mm in April. According to Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre data till 8.30 p.m., Cottonpet recorded 71 mm, Chamarajpet 69.5 mm, Bommanahalli 61 mmm and Pulakeshinagar recorded 59.5 mm.

Rain becomes a pain for commuters as thousands get stranded on roads

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The intense spell of rain brought Bengaluru to a standstill on Wednesday evening, leaving thousands of commuters stranded on roads, stuck in traffic, or struggling to find a way back home during peak hours.

For many, what is usually a routine journey turned into a long and exhausting ordeal.

Sangeetha P., a commuter from Queens Road, said she spent hours trying to get home to J.P. Nagar but failed to find a ride. "I started looking for an auto or cab around 6 p.m., but even by 11 p.m. I couldn't get one. The auto fare is usually around ₹350, but after the rain there were hardly any autos available. The apps were showing nearly ₹500 for the same trip," she said, describing the situation as chaotic and frustrating.

The situation was no better for those dependent on public transport. Many commuters were unable to even reach bus stops owing to flooded roads and footpaths.

Kavitha, a software employee working on Lavelle Road, said even walking short distances became a challenge.

Across the city, the rain led to widespread traffic disruptions. According to the Bengaluru Traffic Police, several areas reported slow-moving traffic owing to flooding, fallen trees, and a surge in vehicular movement during peak hours.

The police were forced to divert vehicles at multiple locations, leaving commuters navigating unfamiliar routes and frequent detours. Key arterial stretches such as Silk Board junction, Hosur Road, Bannerghatta Road, Outer Ring Road, Marathahalli, Whitefield, and Hebbal were among the worst affected, with traffic crawling along.

That sinking feeling: A vehicle gets stuck in a sinkhole owing to the downpour on Wednesday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

A traffic police official said flooding in low-lying areas and fallen tree branches significantly worsened the situation.

"The combination of heavy rain, peak-hour traffic, and obstructions on the road led to major slowdown across the city," the official said.

Public transport services also felt the strain. Buses operated by the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) were delayed owing to congestion, although officials maintained that services continued without major disruption. In one instance, a breakdown of an electric BMTC bus near K.R. Puram Market towards the city further aggravated traffic delays in the area.

Meanwhile, fares on app-based autorickshaw and cab services surged sharply, adding to the commuters' woes. Prices were reported to be nearly 50% higher than usual, with limited availability making it even harder to secure a ride

Metro goes the slow route

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Metro services in Bengaluru operated at reduced speeds on Wednesday evening, even as widespread traffic congestion was reported across several key roads.

Officials from Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) told *The Hindu* that train movement was slowed as a precautionary measure owing to adverse weather conditions.

"Services were regulated to ensure passenger safety, but overall operations remained smooth," an official said, adding that normal speeds were restored after the rain subsided.

The sudden downpour triggered a sharp surge in metro ridership, with many commuters opting for the metro over road transport.

Suresh Kumar, a regular commuter, described chaotic scenes at the Majestic interchange station. "This is the first time I have seen such heavy crowds. The rain coincided with peak hour, and the station was overflowing," he said.

How decentralising therapy can support mental health treatment

Antidepressants are increasingly being prescribed by general physicians, often in busy settings; if a clinician has limited follow-up and no access to psychosocial services, medication becomes the most feasible intervention, and over time reinforces both clinical habits and patient expectations

Jeel Vasa
Richa Shete
Madhurima Vuddemary

The Indian Psychiatric Society recommends a stepped-care model, where people with milder issues are first managed with psychosocial interventions before initiating pharmacotherapy. MIKA BAUMEISTER/UNSPLASH

India continues to face a large mental health treatment gap, with nearly 85% of individuals with common mental disorders receiving no formal care. However, over the past decade, access to antidepressant medication, especially drugs called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), has improved, marking an important shift toward making treatment more available.

This expansion is important because, for moderate to severe depression, antidepressants are not optional but often essential. For many patients, they remain one of the most effective and life-changing interventions available.

The concern, therefore, is not about medications themselves. It is about how, when, and for whom they are being used in routine practice. Emerging evidence suggests that a significant proportion of prescriptions either occur without a clear diagnosis of major depression, particularly in primary care settings, or have poor follow-up.

The Indian Psychiatric Society recommends a stepped-care model, where people with milder issues are first managed with psychosocial interventions before initiating pharmacotherapy. Yet in practice, this step is often bypassed and medication becomes the first-line response even in situations where other approaches may be more appropriate.

Consequences of routine prescribing

The distinction between distress and disorder is important. In busy clinics, this may blur. Patients present with sleep problems, work stress, interpersonal conflicts, or grief. These experiences are real and often impairing, and deserve attention. Even when they do not meet the threshold for clinical depression, they may still require psychological support. They are not always best addressed through medication alone, especially when they are closely tied to identifiable life circumstances.

Routine prescribing in such scenarios is understandable. It offers a quick, tangible intervention in systems where time is limited and follow-up uncertain, whether the presentation is mild depression or distress that does not meet diagnostic thresholds. However, when medication becomes the default response, we risk shifting focus away from understanding context and towards suppressing the symptoms.

Antidepressants are not addictive in the conventional sense. They do not cause cravings, people do not feel the need to keep increasing the dose, and they do not lead to compulsive use. These details are important and must be clear, especially for patients who benefit from them. However, discontinuation symptoms are well-known, with some individuals experiencing dizziness, sleep disturbances, or sensory symptoms when attempting to stop.

This concern has been reflected in recent policy discussions, including a U.K. House of Lords debate, which highlighted issues of long-term antidepressant use, withdrawal difficulties, and the need for better prescribing guidance and tapering support.

On the other hand, sleeping pills that are usually prescribed alongside antidepressant medications complicate the problem. They are frequently co-prescribed for sleep or anxiety and can be effective in the short term. Unlike antidepressants, however, they can lead to true dependence, where the body gets used to them, higher doses may be needed over time, and stopping them can be difficult. With longer use, they carry risks of dependence, cognitive slowing, and difficult withdrawal. Patients are also often unaware of the risks of these medications.

Over time, patterns emerge. What begins as short-term symptomatic treatment can extend into prolonged use, particularly in the absence of structured follow-up. In such instances, patients may continue medication not because it is still clearly indicated, but because stopping it has become difficult.

There is also a less visible cost. When treatment is centred primarily around medication, opportunities to develop coping strategies, address maladaptive thinking, and engage with underlying stressors may be reduced. Many individuals with mild to moderate symptoms benefit significantly with addition of brief psychological interventions such as behavioural activation or problem-solving therapy, including structured models like the 'Healthy Activity Program', which has been effective in Indian primary-care settings. These approaches reduce symptoms and build skills that persist beyond the treatment period.

Little choice

It is tempting to frame this as just overprescription by doctors. In reality, it reflects a deeper structural issue.

India has a limited mental health workforce, and psychotherapy remains concentrated in urban and specialist settings. In many parts of the country, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, pharmacological treatment is the only consistently available form of care. When alternatives are scarce, prescribing becomes less a choice and more a necessity.

Public health programmes illustrate this imbalance. Access to screening and medication have improved but the availability of structured psychotherapy remains uneven. Continuity of care is difficult to maintain across districts; even where frameworks exist, implementation varies widely. This shortage is further reflected in the limited number of formal psychotherapy training positions, such as M.Phil seats, which remain insufficient relative to the population's needs.

Antidepressants are also increasingly being prescribed by general physicians and non-psychiatric practitioners, often in busy settings with limited time. If a clinician has ten minutes, limited follow-up, and no access to psychosocial services, medication becomes the most feasible intervention, and over time reinforces both clinical habits and patient expectations.

Where options are available, prescribing patterns tend to shift even in non-psychiatric practitioners, with reduced reliance on antidepressants. This suggests that clinicians do incorporate these options when they are accessible. Thus, if psychotherapy were more easily available, many patients could be referred for it, sometimes even before medication.

Therapy beyond the clinic

Expanding access to psychotherapy can't rely solely on increasing specialists' numbers, which is a slow and resource-intensive process. Decentralising psychotherapy offers a more immediate pathway, based on identifying core, evidence-based components of psychological support that can be delivered by trained non-specialists within community settings.

There is growing evidence to support this approach. In low- and middle-income countries, brief interventions delivered by non-trained counsellors, such as

India has a limited mental health workforce, and psychotherapy remains concentrated in specialist settings. In many semi-urban and rural areas, pharmacological treatment is the only consistently available form of care. When alternatives are scarce, prescribing becomes more a necessity

behavioural activation, problem-solving, and psychoeducation, have demonstrated meaningful reductions in depression and anxiety. In 2006, after losing a patient who could not afford to travel for care, a senior psychiatrist, Dixon Chibanda in Zimbabwe, recognised the need to take mental health services into communities rather than wait for patients to reach hospitals. The Friendship Bench in Zimbabwe trained old women to deliver structured therapy to people with mild levels of mental distress on park benches, showing reductions of almost 43% on depression scales within six months. In India, the 'Atmiyata' programme uses community volunteers to provide basic emotional support and identify individuals who may need referral, linking local care with formal services.

These interventions are intentionally simple. Skills like active listening, validation, sleep hygiene, and structured activity scheduling can be manual and scaled up, and delivered in schools, workplaces, primary care centres, and community groups, bringing support closer to where people actually live and struggle. When these approaches are adapted to local culture, they become easier to understand and accept. Using familiar language, social roles, and everyday examples helps people engage with care more naturally.

Nearly 85% of people don't access formal care and turn elsewhere for help. A significant fraction seek help from faith-based healers, traditional practitioners or community elders, who often serve as the first point of contact for distress. Rather than viewing this in opposition to medical care, there is value in engaging with these systems, especially for distress, while building pathways to identify and refer more severe afflictions to formal mental health services.

At the same time, limits must be clear. Complex conditions, trauma-focused therapies, and individuals at high risk require specialist expertise. Primary diagnosis and treatment of conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and obsessive compulsive disorder should remain within specialist care settings – but a substantial component of ongoing supportive care can be safely and effectively task-shared within the community.

A stepped-care model can ensure decentralised care complements, rather than replaces, professional psychotherapy. Even in instances of seemingly simple distress, if the signs that an individual presents with fall outside the provider's level of training or if they fail to improve, they must be referred in timely fashion to more expert care. Expanding non-specialist roles must overall be a cautious venture. New cadres risk overstepping competence and delaying referrals, however, underscoring the need for clear safeguards, supervision, and referral pathways.

Not less treatment

For moderate to severe depression, medications remain central and often indispensable. In many cases, the best outcomes arise from combining pharmacological treatment with psychotherapy. This integrated approach should remain the standard rather than the exception.

For milder presentations, the sequence can differ. Psychosocial interventions can be tried first, with medication introduced when needed. Even when antidepressants are started, regular review allows for dose adjustment or tapering in appropriate instances.

Training frontline providers in brief psychosocial interventions, embedding counselling within primary care, strengthening community support systems, and introducing basic prescription monitoring can collectively shift practice without major structural disruption. Digital platforms can extend this further, supporting both delivery and follow-up in areas with limited specialist access.

India has already made progress in improving access to treatment. The next step is ensuring that this access is balanced, thoughtful, and responsive to different levels of need. Medication should remain available when it is needed. But it should not be the default option, especially when it is possible to have alternatives available.

A system that offers both, clearly, appropriately, and at scale, is far more likely to serve patients well.

(Dr. Jeel Vasa, jeelvasa.98@gmail.com, is a Psychiatrist from AIIMS Nagpur. Dr. Richa Shete is an MD in Community Medicine and founder of Make A Conversation Foundation, with experience across rural, tribal, and urban mental health care. Dr. Madhurima Vuddemary is an MBBS doctor with a special interest in public health. All three are associated with the Association for Socially Applicable Research (ASAR).)

The distinctive eye-shaped spots act as a defence against predators. GETTY IMAGES

Why some marine species are speckled with 'eyes'

Divya Gandhi

They look like eyes staring back at you daringly: butterflies have them and so do birds, to ward off predators. Now, it turns out, many marine creatures exhibit "eye spots" on their bodies as a defence against being the next meal of a shark or a large marine mammal.

A new study published in *Nature* delves into the evolutionary history of marine skates and rays to find out the origins of this visual defence.

Why do some anti-predator defences such as spots appear in some groups but are completely absent in others, the authors pondered. "Our results show that you have to look at the full range of options for avoiding predators. Eye spots evolve only under certain ecological and defensive conditions," said lead author Madicken Åkerman, of the Department of Zoology at Stockholm University, Sweden, in a release.

This is one solution among many in the evolutionary arms race between predator and prey, he added. Prey have evolved a large array of defences to avoid predation, including mechanical, visual, chemical and behavioural traits to foil predators, said the paper.

The bombardier beetle is a classic example: it sprays a hot and toxic jet of chemicals to repel predators with startling force.

The scientists examined the co-evolution of conspicuous markings with alternative anti-predator defences and assessed their evolutionary drivers in batoids (skates and rays, superorder Batoidea), a diverse group of cartilaginous fishes comprising over 600 species."Conspicuous markings are more commonly found in skate and ray species lacking robust anti-predator defences," the study found.

Skates and rays have a large range of predators, including sharks, marine mammals and large fish. While some marine species develop powerful electric organs or venomous spines, others rely on camouflage, and bury themselves in the ocean bed. But smaller-bodied species, without these "weapons", which live in sun-lit shallow waters less than 200 metres deep, were far more likely to develop bold spots or "eyespots," the authors found.

"Eyespots are far from random. They tend to evolve in species that lack strong physical defences, such as venomous tail stings or electric shocks, and that live in bright, shallow waters where visual signals are effective," said senior author J.L. Fitzpatrick in a release.

Interestingly, research found that eyespots almost never evolved directly. Skates, for instance, first gained basic markings that later evolved into concentric-ring eyespots. Smaller species without "weapons" were much more likely to develop bold spots if they lived in well-lit, shallow waters less than 200 metres deep, the paper said.

"Eyespots ... tend to evolve in species that lack strong physical defences, such as venomous tail stings or electric shocks, and that live in bright, shallow waters where visual signals are effective," said Prof. Fitzpatrick. Eyespots "are one solution among many in the evolutionary arms race between predator and prey," per lead author Prof. Åkerman.

Eyespots are far from random. "They tend to evolve in species that lack strong physical defences, such as venomous tail stings or electric shocks, and that live in bright, shallow waters where visual signals are effective," according to Prof. Fitzpatrick.

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

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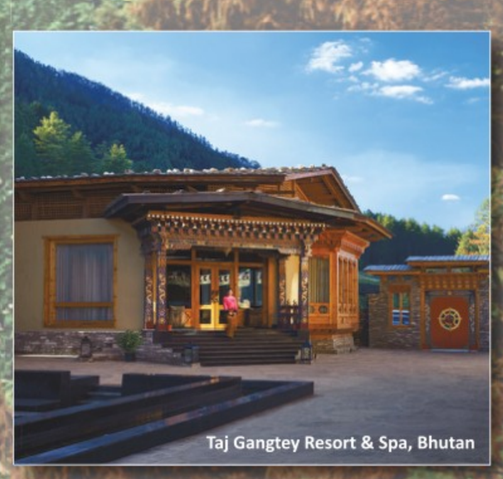
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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Value of Iran's national rial currency against one U.S. dollar

1.8 million. Iran's national rial currency hit a record high on Wednesday of 1.8 million to $1 as ceasefire with the U.S. and Israel still holds. The rial remained stable for weeks during the war, which began on February 28, in part because there was little trading or imports coming into the country. PTI

Cameras installed at 585 locations along border belt in Punjab

2,290 Punjab Police is strengthening the "second line of defence", a deep, technology-driven security grid designed to choke the lifelines of organised crime networks operating with cross-border linkages, an official statement said. PTI

Persons arrested in Iran since the West Asia war began

4,000 Iran has executed at least 21 people and has arrested more than 4,000 since the war began, the UN said. Since the U.S.-Israeli strikes sparked the war in late February, at least nine people have been executed. PTI

The estimated cost of the Iran war for the U.S. so far

25 in $ billion. The U.S.' war in Iran has cost $25 billion, a senior Pentagon official said, providing the first official estimate of the military's price tag for the conflict. Jules Hurst, who is performing the duties of the comptroller, told lawmakers that most of that money was for munitions. REUTERS

Children killed in Bangladesh due to measles outbreak

227 Bangladesh has recorded 227 child deaths since March in one of its worst outbreaks of measles in decades, with the number of suspected cases reaching nearly 35,000, government data showed on Wednesday. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Increasing coverage, growing distress

Rising insurance coverage has not increased hospitalisation or reduced out-of-pocket expenditure, as more people shift to private sector care with higher costs; govt.-funded health insurance schemes are failing to protect households from financial hardship while disproportionately benefiting the better-off

ECONOMIC NOTES

Indranil
Montu Bose

The latest NSS data of the 80th round on "Household Social Consumption: Health" reveals several concerning results that need wider discussion. The survey, conducted between January and December 2025, shows that while insurance coverage has increased considerably compared to the 2017-18 (75th round), this has not translated into a significant rise in the utilisation of hospital care. A greater proportion of people are now going to the private sector.

Meanwhile, out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditure on hospitalisation has risen sharply between 2017-18 and 2025, particularly in the private sector.

Coverage without care

Currently, 47.4% of rural households and 44.3% of urban households are covered by some form of health insurance. This has been achieved mainly by more than a two-and-a-half-fold increase in coverage between 2017-18 and 2025 of government-financed health insurance (GFHI) schemes such as Prime Minister Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) and Swasthya Saathi (in West Bengal).

The NSS definition of GFHI also includes the Employees' State Insurance Scheme (ESIS), the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS), and those for State government employees, etc. However, as per official records, increased coverage of ESIS or CGHS would have very little contribution to this significant jump in coverage.

In the 2017-18 round, hospitalisation rates had decreased considerably. Despite the increase in insurance coverage, the hospitalisation rate remains below 2014 levels, though it increased marginally compared to the 2017-18 rate in rural areas. In urban areas, the rate has declined further (Figure 1).

A persistent gap

Latest NSS data* reveal limited gains in hospital use and rising expenses despite a surge in insurance schemes

Table 1: Hospitalisation cases (per 1,000 persons)

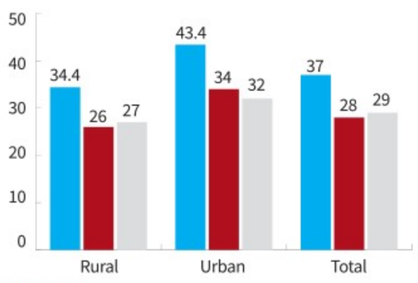
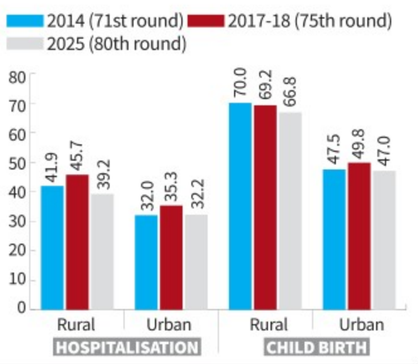


Table 2: Share (per cent) of public sector in total hospitalised episodes and child birth

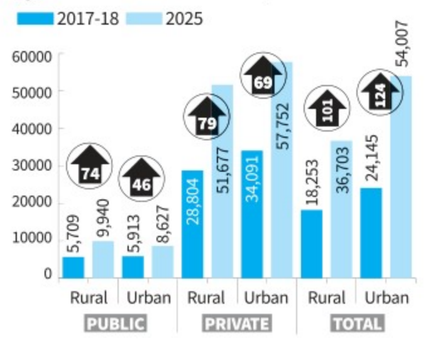


Shift to private care

Between 2017-18 and 2025, there has been a considerable reduction in the use of public institutions for hospitalisation and childbirth. More people are opting for private care. There was a rise in the use of public services between 2014 and 2017-18. For non-hospitalisation care, public sector usage has increased slightly in rural areas but declined in urban areas (Figure 2).

Increased access to insurance coverage is failing to protect people from financial hardship. OOP expenditure on hospitalisation has more than doubled in both rural and urban areas between

Table 3: Average OOP on hospitalisation (₹): 2017-18 and 2025 by location and facility type (growth rate in % within arrow)



SOURCE: AUTHORS' ESTIMATES FROM UNIT RECORDS OF VARIOUS NSS SOCIAL CONSUMPTION: HEALTH ROUNDS

2017-18 and 2025. Even in public hospitals, patients incur significant expenses due to the unavailability of medicines, diagnostic services, and high transport and other non-medical costs. As expected, when people seek care in the private sector, they incur very high costs. Average hospitalisation expenses in private hospitals have increased by 70% in rural areas and 80% in urban areas (Figure 3).

GFHI schemes such as PMJAY are meant to cover high-cost, low-frequency hospitalisation needs for enrolled households. Care can be sought in empanelled public and private facilities, and these schemes are promoted as offering free treatment in private hospitals. Public hospitals are, anyway, largely subsidised and should be either free or more affordable. Of the people enrolled under the GFHIs and needing hospitalisation, 57% sought care in private hospitals. Very few got free care, as promised under these schemes. The average OOP expenditure (excluding childbirth) is ₹31,250 in rural areas and ₹34,259 in urban areas.

Although GFHIs target socio-economically backward sections, many States have extended coverage to non-poor populations. Though there is relatively higher coverage among the poorer income groups, when it comes to utilisation of services under these schemes, it is the relatively better off who benefit disproportionately. Data show that only 13% of those using hospitalisation services under these schemes in urban areas belong to the poorest class. The inclusion of non-poor households has also increased utilisation and placed a greater strain on States' budgets. In Haryana and West Bengal, nearly 15% of their State health budgets are spent on GFHIs. This increased fiscal strain is also leading to delays in reimbursement to private providers.

Essentially, GFHIs use tax money to subsidise care for the private sector. This helps the private sector to have access to markets which were hitherto out of its reach due to low purchasing power. In India, the private sector largely functions on the principles of profit maximisation, with limited motivation for social solidarity and is essentially unregulated. Since GFHI reimbursement rates are below market rates, even though the rates are more remunerative than CGHS, patients are often charged additionally.

Thus, the experience of the first seven years of PMJAY and GFHIs in general shows that these schemes are 'of the rich', 'for the profit', and 'by the poor people'! Is that a desirable consequence? It may be time to rethink the insurance-led model of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and refocus on strengthening the public healthcare system to deliver universal, comprehensive care. In this context, Ayushman Arogya Mandir (AAM) – PMJAY's relatively neglected counterpart aimed at providing comprehensive primary care, including services for non-communicable diseases – shows a glimmer of hope. However, it remains severely underfunded, much like the National Health Mission.

(Indranil is a Professor at the School of Government and Public Policy, O.P Jindal Global University. Montu Bose is an Assistant Professor at the School of Health Systems Studies, TISS, Mumbai. With CMIE data inputs from Akarsh CO, Research Associate, O.P. Jindal Global University)

THE GIST

- Increased insurance coverage has not led to a significant increase in utilisation of hospital care, with more people going to the private sector.
- Out-of-pocket expenditure on hospitalisation has seen tremendous increases, and insurance is failing to protect people from financial hardship.

Why has the creamy layer debate returned to court?

Is the current push based on a misreading of the judgment? Can income be used as a proxy?

LETTER & SPIRIT

Prannv Dhawan
Vignesh Karthik K.R.

Fresh petitions before the Supreme Court are seeking to extend the creamy layer principle to SC/ST reservations, based on a misreading of the 2024 Davinder Singh judgment. The move revives a decades-old debate about whether income can serve as a proxy for caste-based disadvantage, and whether social justice can be trapped inside an economic test.

The renewed push

On March 10, the Supreme Court issued notice to the Centre and all States on a public interest litigation filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay seeking the exclusion of a "creamy layer" from SC/ST reservations. A separate plea, filed in February, sought an income-based prioritisation mechanism within these quotas. Both petitions claim constitutional sanction from the same source: the seven-judge bench decision in *State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh* (2024).

That judgment permitted States to sub-classify Scheduled Caste communities to direct reservation benefits toward the most marginalised within them. Four of seven judges made passing observations that creamy layer logic might apply to SC/ST groups.

A doctrine born in ambiguity

The creamy layer principle entered Indian constitutional law through the judgment in *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India* (1992), where the Supreme Court upheld OBC reservations but held that the more advanced sections, the "creamy layer," should be excluded from benefits.

The 1993 Office Memorandum that followed identified creamy layer exclusion primarily through status, not income. Holding a Class I or Class II post in government was the proxy, a recognition that institutional power compounds across generations.

This architecture was progressively diluted. A 2004 clarificatory letter from the Department of Personnel and Training began treating PSU salaries as a standalone disqualifying criterion. On March 11, the Supreme Court in *Union of India v. Rohith Nathan* struck down that letter, holding that parental salary alone cannot determine creamy layer status. The 1993 OM's status-based logic was restored, but the deeper premise of the doctrine, that economic attainment adequately measures the erasure of social disadvantage, remained intact and unexamined.

The Ambedkar objection

In his 1932 note to the Lothian Committee, B.R. Ambedkar warned that excluding wealthy or educated individuals from the category of untouchables was "a totally erroneous view."

At the Mahar Conference of 1936, Ambedkar put it concretely: the educated, propertied Mahar still cannot open a shop without customers leaving when his caste is known; he still cannot apply for a job without his identity becoming a disqualification. Economic progress and social emancipation travel on different tracks, and the creamy layer doctrine collapses the two.

Data presented in *Jaishri Patil v. Union of India* (2021) showed that even Group D government employees were rendered ineligible for post-matric scholarships due to income-testing. The court noted that a family earning ₹6 lakh a year cannot be equated with one earning ₹24 lakh simply because both exceed a common ceiling. Statistical research published by Nishith Prakash showed that elite capture of quota benefits was a myth. Contrary to the popular notion, the positive impact of quota policy is concentrated among 'the less-educated SC members in rural areas.' The doctrine's bluntness produces what may be called a creamy layer trap: the bar is set low enough to exclude the barely stable, yet the social burdens that reservation addresses persist regardless of salary bracket.

The SC/ST distinction

The case for creamy layer exclusion was always weaker for SC/ST communities than for OBCs. Sub-classification, what Davinder Singh actually authorised, is a different instrument entirely. It asks which sub-communities within the SC list are least represented and directs preference toward them.

Extending creamy layer logic to SC/ST would mean removing individuals from reservation eligibility based on parental income, precisely what Ambedkar argued was constitutionally and sociologically indefensible. Justice B.R. Gavai, who endorsed the broader principle in Davinder Singh, himself acknowledged that the criteria for SC/ST cannot be identical to those for OBCs.

Parliament's moment

The *Rohith Nathan* judgment creates a narrow but real opportunity for legislative recalibration, one that measures social backwardness by the subordination they continue to face. Parliament has both the constitutional authority and the democratic obligation to clarify that sub-classification and creamy layer exclusion are distinct instruments, and that the latter has no application to communities whose inclusion in the Presidential list was never conditioned on poverty.

(Prannv Dhawan is an LLM Candidate at Yale Law School. Vignesh Karthik KR is a postdoctoral research affiliate at the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden)

Lokayukta arrests senior KAS officer, driver on charge of taking bribe for official favour

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Lokayukta officials on Wednesday arrested a senior Karnataka Administrative Service (KAS) officer and his driver on the charge of accepting a bribe for an official favour. They allegedly demanded a total of ₹30 lakh in connection with a land-related matter in Bengaluru.

According to officials, a case has been registered under Sections 7(a) and 7A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (Amendment Act, 2018). The complainant, Ravi Kumar, 41, a resident of Attur in Yelahanka, had approached authorities alleging that a bribe was being demanded to secure a favourable order in a Revenue Tribunal case pending before the Assistant Commissioner (North) office.

The accused officer, Nagaprashanth, KAS, serving as Special Assistant Commissioner (North) and Special Land Acquisition Officer-1 at KIADB, along with his outsourced driver Kumar, allegedly demanded ₹30 lakh to clear the file.

Investigators said the driver had allegedly accepted ₹15 lakh earlier on the officer's instructions. On Wednesday, the driver again accepted the remaining ₹15 lakh, following which a trap was laid and both the accused were secured.

Both the accused are currently in custody, and further investigation is under way to establish the full extent of the alleged corruption and any possible involvement of others.

3 doctors held

MYSURU: Three doctors at private medical facilities in K.R. Pet in Mandya district, have been arrested in a case related to foetal examination of pregnant minors, following Lokayukta inspections into illegal sex determination tests at prenatal diagnostic centres.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (April 30, Thursday), the following articles are available:

- Increasing coverage, growing distress **newsth.live/insurancecoverage**
- How decentralising therapy can help bridge India's treatment gap **newsth.live/treatmentgap**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Rail Wheel Plant/Bela
(Distt. - Saran), Bihar - 841221

E-Open Tender Notice No: S/RWP/E/2026-27/02 Dated : 27.04.2026. Principal Chief Materials Manager/Rail Wheel Plant, Bela for and on behalf of the President of India invites online "e-Open Tender", through Indian Railways E-Procurement Website **www.ireps.gov.in**, for supply of following Stores item at RWP /Bela. The closing time of all tenders is 14:00 hrs. **Tender No.:** 01261063A, **Short Description of item:** Sampling Spoon. **Quantity:** 4715 Nos. **Date of tender opening/Closing:** 20.05.2026 at 14:00 Hrs. 1. Website address, on which full tender details can be seen and downloaded from, is **www.ireps.gov.in**. 2. The prospective firms / bidders submitting bid are advised to remain in touch with the above website for updates including **Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation** with respect to the above tender. However, this information will also be invariably published in all the concerned newspapers.

for PCMM/RWP/Bela
RWP/CPRO/ADVT/2026-27/08

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TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender are invited for Printing student ID Cards with school name printed tag & card holder for Army Public School ASC C&C. Tender Enquiry/Form to be collected from school office after payment of ₹500/- (DD in favour APS ASC Centre & College) till 30 Apr 2026. Last date to submit filled tender form is 06 May 2026 at 1100 hrs.

PO / Member 1,
For Sch Mgt

E-TENDER NOTICE
SAI

Sports Authority of India, NSSC, Bangalore invites e-tender for following works: -

1. SAI/NSSC/ENGG/NIT-03/2026-27 for **RENOVATION OF ACADEMIC BLOCK AT SAI, NSSC, BANGALORE.** For more details please visit E-Tender website **http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app, https://sportsauthorityofindia.nic.in & http://www.saisouth-bangalore.com.**

The Last date of Submission of E-Tender is 12.05.2026 up to 16.00 hrs.

Sd/-, Deputy Director-Infra

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public are hereby informed that my client **SRI. RAJESH HEGDE**, (Aadhar No. 9013 4791 2167) intends to purchase the immoveable Properties more fully described in the Schedule hereunder from its present owner **SMT. ANUPAMA MURTHY**.

Any Persons, financial institutions, having any sort of claim/rights/interest/ charge/on the below said Property or any objections for the said sale of the Property may file their objections in writing along with supporting documents, addressed to the undersigned within 10 Days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, it shall be construed that there are no claims of any sort over the below said Property and my client shall be advised to proceed with the proposed transaction. Any claims thereafter shall not be entertained.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Vacant Site bearing No.3029, formed by Bangalore Development Authority, situated at Block No. 4, Sir M Visweswaraiah Layout, Bangalore, measuring East to West 9 Mts and North to South 12 Mts, totally measuring 108 square Meters and bounded on:- East by : Site No. 3028, West by : Site No. 3030, North by : Site No. 3054, South by : Road.

S. ANIL KUMAR, ADVOCATE
No.2554, 14th Cross, 24th Main Road,
HSR 1st Sector, Bangalore 560 102
CELL: 98864 38330
anilkumar_s01@yahoo.com

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No.:
Y/E.29/2026-27/11 Dated 23.04.2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tender for the following work.

Name of work	Approx.Value
(Re-tender)**1)** Enhancement of LHB/ICF coach maintenance facilities at Mysuru. **2)** Ashokapuram-Construction of service rooms for C&W activities at Ashokapuram station-Electrical arrangements.	Rs. 14,47,966.78/-

E-Tender Notice No.:
Y/E.29/2026-27/12 Dated 23.04.2026

Name of work	Approx.Value
(Re-tender) Extension of PF No.1 to 450 meters with High level platform, platform shelter and other amenity works at Masarahalli	Rs. 6,97,053/-

Last date for Submission of bids :
Upto 11:00 hrs on 14.05.2026

For details log on : **www.ireps.gov.in**

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer, /General/Mysuru
PUB/76/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2026-27

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South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | @SWRAILWAYHQ | @sw_railways

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

APPLICATION NOTIFICATION NO. 565/STBA/04-03/2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites sealed applications for engagement of station Ticket booking agents (STBA) at the following railway station over Bengaluru Division of south western railway for issuing of Unreserved/General Tickets through unreserved ticket system (UTS) on commission basis for a period of Three (03) years:

Sl.No.	Name of the Station	Section Code	Station Category
1.	Banaswadi	BAND	NSG-5
2.	Channarayapatna	CNPA	
3.	Shravanabelagola	SBGA	

Last date for Submission of Application : **Upto 10.00 hrs to 15.00 hrs on 01.06.2026**

For details log on : **www.swr.indianrailways.gov.in**

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Bengaluru
PUB/71/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2026-27

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South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | @SWRAILWAYHQ | @sw_railways

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
NOTIFICATION
Hubballi, the 21st April, 2026

S.O. 1986(E) - In the exercise of the powers conferred by clause (6) of section 20F and clause 7A of South Western Railway, Road Safety Projects, Hubballi) hereby authorizes the officers mentioned in column (4) of the table below as 'Competent Authority' and the officers mentioned in column (5) of the table below as 'Arbitrator' to perform the functions as such authority under the said Act with effect from date of publication of this notification in the official gazette in respect of Special Railway Projects mentioned in column (2) relating to districts mentioned in column (3) of the table below for Land Acquisition required for the public purpose.

SN	Name of the Project	District	Competent Authority	Arbitrator
1	Bangalore city Jolarpettai - Construction of Road Over Bridge (ROB) in lieu of LC No.112 at km 273/100-200 between Kamsamudram and Bisanattam station.	Kolar	Assistant Commissioner, Kolar	Regional Commissioner, Bengaluru

[F.No.SWR/W.352/RSP/Land/CALA/2026]

For details log on : https://egazette.gov.in

NINGAPPA CHANDAPPA CHALUWADI,
Deputy Chief Engineer/Road Over Bridgs, Road Safety Projects/ Hubballi
PUB/74/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2026-27

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South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | @SWRAILWAYHQ | @sw_railways

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that our Client intends to purchase the below mentioned Schedule Property from, **Mrs. SHOBHA P REDDY,** W/o. Mr. H G P Reddy, Aged about 58 years, Residing at Doddadunnasandra Cross, Develapura, Devanagundi, Bangalore Rural – 560067, **("Owner").**

The Owner represents that she is the absolute owner and she is in possession of the Schedule Property and the Schedule Property is free from any kind of encumbrance, suits, and proceedings under any statute. Any person or persons asserting any right, title, interest, claim or demand whatsoever in the Schedule Property or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage, charge, lien, gift, inheritance, bequest, possession, lis pendens, maintenance, easement, memorandum of understanding, agreement, power of attorney, option, right of first refusal, pre-emption or otherwise whatsoever is hereby required to notify the same in writing to the undersigned within a period of **Seven (7) days** from the date of issuance of this notice with all documentary proof thereof failing which our Client will treat the title of the Schedule Property as clear and marketable and will proceed to enter into the sale transaction.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that Piece and parcel of the vacant **Site No. 2,** having **PID No.150300401300400201** and **155/2,** measuring East West **36.36+32.42/2** meters, North South **12.12+12.72/2** meters, totally measuring **432.23** square meters, or **4653.5** square feet, carved out of Survey **No. 58,** measuring **0-25** Gunta land being converted for non-agricultural residential purpose as per Sub-Divisional Officer's Office, Doddaballapur Sub-Division, Bangalore under No. A.L.N.S.R.(Ho) 21/94-95, situated at **Devalapura Village Anugondanahalli Hobli, Hosakote Taluk Bangalore Rural District.,** bounded as follows:

East by : Road, West by : Land of Munireddy, North by : Site No.3, and; South by : Site No.1.

DEVENDRA NAIK, Advocate
ATRIUM JURIS
Advocates and Legal Consultants
No. 510, 1st Floor, Lakshmiram Building, 6th Cross, Mahalakshmi Layout, Near Karnataka Bank, Bengaluru-560 086
Ph: 9740287003

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that our client **Mrs. NAGAVENI C R** Wife of Late Mr.Kempaiah to bring to the notice of the general public that the original **(1)** sale deed dt 15.12.1979 doc No.2903-1979-80 and **(2)** Gift deed dt 27.10.2016 doc No. RJN-1-03215-2016-17, CD No.RJND298 in Book-1, both the documents are registered in the office of Sub Registrar Rajajinagara, Bangalore, are lost/ misplaced.

If any person/s, firm, company, institution or organization has any claim are holding the afore mentioned documents, they shall return the same or contact the undersigned in writing within **07 days** from the date of this notice failing which it will be presumed that there are no claims.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of Eastern portion of Property bearing **No.9 & 10,** bearing Municipal No.9/10, situated at **3rd Main Road, Subbanna Garden, Marenahalli Village, Yeshwanthapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore,** (Amalgamated both North East and South East property) **EPID No.2030882337 & Property No.9/10,** measuring E x W **30 feet** and N x S **40 feet,** totally **1200 Sq.ft.,** together with RCC roofed building thereon and bounded by:

East : Road, West : Western portion of same property No.9 & 10 belongs to Mr.Shanmugam, North : Private Property, South : Road.

Shivakumar, Advocate
M/s. RASHI LEGAL,
No.1252/2, M.C.Layout, A.Dasarahalli, Magadi Main Road, Bangalore 560 040
M-9538178060,

E-TENDER NOTICE
SAI

Sports Authority of India, NSSC, Bangalore invites e-tender for following works: -

1. SAI/NSSC/ENGG/NIT-04/2026-27 for **RENOVATION OF SEMINAR HALL INCLUDING REMOVAL OF EXISTING ACOUSTICS, FALSE CEILING AND INSTALLATION OF NEW ACOUSTIC SYSTEM, FALSE CEILING ELECTRICAL WORKS & AC UNITS AT SAI, NSSC, BANGALORE.** For more details please visit E-Tender website **http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app, https://sportsauthorityofindia.nic.in & http://www.saisouth-bangalore.com.**

The Last date of Submission of E-Tender is 12.05.2026 up to 16.00 hrs.

Sd/-, Deputy Director-Infra

E-TENDER NOTICE
SAI

Sports Authority of India, NSSC, Bangalore invites e-tender for following works: -

1. SAI/NSSC/ENGG/NIT-06/2026-27 for **CONSTRUCTION OF SHED FOR THE GYM AREA AND SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF EXHAUST FAN AT STC DHARWAD.** For more details please visit E-Tender website **http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app, https://sportsauthorityofindia.nic.in & http://www.saisouth-bangalore.com.**

The Last date of Submission of E-Tender is 12.05.2026 up to 16.00 hrs.

Sd/-, Deputy Director-Infra

E-TENDER NOTICE
SAI

Sports Authority of India, NSSC, Bangalore invites e-tender for following works: -

1. SAI/NSSC/ENGG/NIT-05/2026-27 for CARRYING OUT THE EXTERNAL PAINTING WORKS AT ALL QUARTERS (TYPE-I,III,IV) AND OTHER ALLIED WORKS AT SAI, NSSC, BANGALORE. For more details please visit E-Tender website **http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app, https://sportsauthorityofindia.nic.in & http://www.saisouth-bangalore.com.**

The Last date of Submission of E-Tender is 12.05.2026 up to 16.00 hrs.

Sd/-, Deputy Director-Infra

BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - I
4th Floor, Telephone House,
Raj Bhavan Road, Bengaluru-560001
O.A. No. 1893/2023

BETWEEN
BANK OF BARODA
Branch at HBR Layout,
#805, 2nd Cross, I Block, HBR layout,
Kalyan Nagar, Bengaluru – 560 043
Represented by its Chief Manager
...... Applicant
AND
SRI. VENKATESH ***........ Defendant***

SUMMONS ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(Viii) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEEDURE) RULES 1993 BY PAPER PUBLICATION

TO THE DEFENDANT
SRI. VENKATESH
S/o Gangappa
Aged about 45 years,
Residing at No. 38/3, Muneshwara Block, 1st Main Road, Nagashetihalli,
Bengaluru – 560 094,
PAN: AZBPV 1359 B

Whereas, the Applicant has instituted an O.A u/s 19 of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993 against the Defendant for recovery of sum of Rs.28,30,614.10/- (Rupees twenty eight lakhs thirty thousand six hundred and fourteen and paisa ten only) together with cost and other reliefs.

The above mentioned Defendant is therefore hereby directed to appear before this Tribunal in person or through an Advocate or duly authorized agent, in support of his/their defense to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication or on 08.06.2026 at 10.30 am (forenoon) as to why the relief prayed for should not be granted.

Given under my hand and the seal of this tribunal on this 22nd day of April 2026.

BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL
Sd/-
REGISTRAR
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I
BANGALORE 560 001

Advocate for Applicant
K. PRAKASH

BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - I
4th Floor, Telephone House,
Raj Bhavan Road, Bengaluru-560001
O.A. No. 1846/2023

BETWEEN
BANK OF BARODA
Branch at HBR Layout,
#805, 2nd Cross, I Block, HBR layout,
Kalyan Nagar, Bengaluru – 560 043
Represented by its Chief Manager
...... Applicant
AND
Sri. **Mr. SURESH M.** ***........ Defendant***

SUMMONS ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(Viii) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEEDURE) RULES 1993 BY PAPER PUBLICATION

TO THE DEFENDANT
Mr. SURESH M.
S/o Mr. Mani, Aged about 35 years
Residing at No.5, Elumandamma Layout Jalahalli, Ramachandrapura, Nalanda Theater, Bengaluru – 560 013
PAN : FUTPS7289M,
Mobile No. 96084 26670

Whereas, the Applicant has instituted an O.A u/s 19 of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993 against the Defendant for recovery of sum of **Rs. 27,66,551.12** (Rupees twenty seven lakhs sixty six thousand five hundred and fifty one and paisa twelve only) together with cost and other reliefs.

The above mentioned Defendant is therefore hereby directed to appear before this Tribunal in person or through an Advocate or duly authorized agent, in support of his/their defense to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication or on **05.06.2026** at 10.30 am (forenoon) as to why the relief prayed for should not be granted.

Given under my hand and the seal of this tribunal on this 22nd day of April 2026.

BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL
Sd/-
REGISTRAR
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I
BANGALORE 560 001

Advocate for Applicant
K. PRAKASH

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

ELECTRICAL BRANCH (GENERAL SERVICES)
CHENNAI DIVISION

Tender Notice-ME29II-Non-Safety-2025

The Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer, General Services, Chennai Division, Southern Railway, IVth Floor, NGO Annex, Park Town, Chennai - 600 003 for and on behalf of the President of India invites ONLINE Open Tenders for the E-Tender No. ME29II-Non-Safety-2025 for the following work as per the Tender Notice issued in our E-Tender portal **www.ireps.gov.in**. The bidders intending to apply for E-Tender for works in Chennai Division, need to get enrolled in the aforesaid E-tender portal and only online tenders will be accepted.

E-TENDER NO	**ME29II-Non-Safety-2025 dt. 28.04.2026**
NAME OF THE WORK	Carrying out non-safety activities and assisting in safety activities under scheduled primary maintenance schedules of Non-AC and AC coaches of Chennai Division for a period of three years.
APPROXIMATE COST OF WORK	₹11,95,13,343.24 (Rupees Eleven Crore Ninety-Five Lakh Thirteen Thousand Three Hundred Forty Three and Paise Twenty Four only.)
EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT	₹ 7,47,600/- (Rupees Seven Lakh Forty Seven Thousand and Six Hundred only.)
CONTRACT PERIOD	Three Years
TENDER CLOSING DATE AND TIME	19.05.2026 and 17.30 Hrs

1. The details of the approximate cost of Tender value, EMD, and the details of bid submission are furnished in the aforesaid E-Portal.
2. The online bids for tenders floated through the above portal are required to be digitally signed.
3. GST rules applicable from time to time will apply for this E-Tender.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer
Chennai Division.

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www.thehinduads.com
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Mangaluru: 0824-2417575 ▪ 2417580
Hubballi: 0836-2338600 ▪ 2335700

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Vijayandra S Tigdoli, Son of Late Shankar Tigdoli resident of H.No. 3566, Shaniwar Khoot, Belagavi, Karnataka – 590001 have changed my name from Vijayandra S Tigdoli to Vijayandra Shankar Tigdoli vide Affidavit No.IN-KA37925706647807Y dated 18.04.2026 at Bengaluru.

I, SEYYANOOR Kuppuswany Neha D/O Seyyanoor Nagalingam Kuppuswamy born on 05/09/1994 residing at 171–H, Pocket–4, Mayur Vihar Phase–1, New Delhi–110091, have changed my name to Neha Seyyanoor Kuppuswamy vide affidavit dated 28/04/2026 at Delhi.

I, K. Umavathi R/O No.317, Govinda Reddy Building, 8th block, koramangala, Bengaluru have changed my name from K. Umavathi to Rani vide affidavit dated 28.04.2026 before notary B. M. Chandrashekar Bengaluru.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that my clients intends to purchase the schedule property from its owners (1) **Mr. N. Ravichandran,** son of **Mr. E. Nagarajan** and (2) Mrs. R. Sabitha, wife of **Mr. N. Ravichandran,** presently at Flat No.G-1, Ground Floor, known as Sahana Nilaya, No.5, Chandra Reddy Layout, S.T. Bed, Viveknagar Post, Bangalore-560 047.

Any person having any right, title or interest of claim whatsoever in respect of the aforesaid property, may lodge his/her objection in writing with documentary proof, within 10 days from the date of publication of this notice, with the undersigned, failing which it will be deemed that there is no legal impediment to complete the sale transaction, without any reference to any such claim, title or interest which shall be deemed to have been waived.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Flat No.G-1, Ground Floor, known as Sahana Nilaya, No.5, Chandra Reddy Layout, S.T. Bed, Viveknagar Post, Bangalore-560 047 bounded on the East by Shanthi Construction Home BuildersWest by Taxila Mansions and Road,North by Dr. Chandrashekar Property, South by late Muganna and sons Property.

STANLEY LAZARUS,
Advocate & Notary, 683, 29th Main, BTM II stage Bangalore-560 076.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE CITY CIVIL AND SESSIONS JUDGE AT BENGALURU CITY
O.S. No.7356/2025

Between:
MR. SYED MUZAMMIL, S/o. Syed Mahmood, Aged about 59 years,R/A. Flat No.TF-001, 3rd Floor,Harmain Albert Legacy, No.31, Promenade Road,Frazer Town,Bengaluru-05: **...PLAINTIFF**
V/S
1.MR.JOSEPH ALBERT & Others
:..DEFENDANTS

NOTICE/SUMMONS TO THE DEFENDANTS 3 & 4

To **3. M/S. HARMAIN CONSTRUCTION**
A Partnership Firm,Having office at No. 3, Chick Bazaar Road Cross,Tasker Town, Bengaluru-84 Represented by its Authorized Signatory/ Managing Partner Mr. Haseeb Khan

4. MR. MOHAMED ASSEM, S/o. Mr. Mohammed Iqbal Kazia, Aged about 56 years, Flat No.301, No.25, Arfa Enclave, Robertson Road,Frazer Town Bengaluru 560 005, Also at No.25 Dubai Creek Village, Post Saeed Deira Dubai, UAE. Rep. by his Special Power of Attorney Holder, Mr. Srikanth

Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has instituted the above suit against the Defendants, praying the Hon'ble Court for permanent injunction and declaration, to declare that I am the owner and in possession of the suit schedule property. To declare that the alleged Sale Deed dated 01.06.2022, registered as document No.INR-1-02918-2022-2023, executed between the 3rd Defendant in favour of 4th Defendant is not genuine and Ab initio void and the same is not binding on the Plaintiff. You are hereby summoned to appear before this Court on 17.07.2026 at 11 a.m in person or through advocate/pleader to answer the questions to the same. Failing which the suit will be heard and determined as ex-parte.

SCHEDULE 'A' PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of premises bearing Corporation No.31 and No.31/1 (Old No.5/3-B) BBMP PID No.91-75-31 & 91-75-31/1, now Premises No.31, and having its PID No.91-75-31, situated at Promenade Road, Division No.47, Pulikeshinagar, BMP Ward No.78 (91), Civil Station, Bangalore, now comes under the limits of BBMP, bearing measuring East :65 feet, West :65 feet, North :56 feet and South: 56 Feet, in all measuring 3640 Sq.Ft. along with a residential building standing thereon and bounded on : East by:Passage to premises No.5/3: Promenade Road and Premises No.5/3A, Promenade Road, West by:Premises No.5/3-C, Promenade Road, North by :Premises NO.5/3-C, Open space of the previous Vendor, South by :Promenade Road

SCHEDULE 'B' PROPERTY

Flat bearing No. TF 001, Third Floor, "HARMAIN ALBERT LEGACY", measuring Approx 3051 Sq.Ft. subject to floor plan after completion of super built up area constructed over the Schedule "A" Property comprising of 4 Bedrooms with attach bathrooms, dining hall, hall, kitchen with utility, with common staircase, lift and individual electric meters, one closed Car parking with the basement/parking area and undivided (UDS) share of 649 Sq.Ft. The Apartment has a bore well, BWSS Meter connection with sump and Overhead tanks.

Given under my hand and seal of the court, this 28th day of April 2026.

BY ORDER OF THE COURT SENIOR SHERISTEDAR, CITY CIVIL COURT, BENGALURU
SRI. SHAKEEL ABDUL RAHIMAN
ADVOCATE, M/S. P.H.MOHAMMED ASSOCIATES, NO.24, Davis Road, Cooke Town, BANGALORE - 560 084 Mobile No.9845069811

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

(SIGNAL & TELECOMMUNICATION WORKSHOP)
PODANUR
E-Tender

For and on behalf of the President of India, The Chief Workshop Manager, Signal and Telecommunication Workshop, Podanur, Coimbatore - 641023, invites E-Tender for the following works as per Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) in the portal **www.ireps.gov.in** Tenderers/Contractors intending to apply for the tender needs to get enrolled in the portal www.ireps.gov.in and only online tenders will be accepted. The Bid Security deposit should be made through online payment gateway or through available modes as mentioned in Tender document.

TENDER NOTICE No. SGW-S-203-DB-645297-26 dated 27.04.2026

1.	Name of work	**Deburring and Flash removal of the insulating components of Q-relay in Machine Shop at S&T/Workshop/ Podanur for a period of Two year.**
2.	Approximate cost of the work	₹ 21,03,264/- Including GST @ 18%
3.	Earnest money to be deposited	₹ 42,100/-
4.	Completion period of work	24 Months
5.	Date and time of closing of tender	15.00 Hrs of 19.05.2026
6.	Website particulars	**www.ireps.gov.in**

For further details, visit office of the Chief Workshop Manager, Signal and Telecommunication Workshop, Podanur, Coimbatore - 641023.

Assistant Works Manager
For Chief Workshop Manager
S&T Workshop, Podanur.

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank
सिंडिकेट Syndicate

MS BUILDING BRANCH : #4 & 5, Ground Floor, M.S.Building,Vidhana Soudha Annexe, Bengaluru-560001
Mail id: cb10692@canarabank.com

POSSESSION NOTICE [SECTION 13(4)]
[Rule - 8 (1)] (For immovable Property)

Whereas The undersigned being the authorized Officer of the **Canara Bank, M S Building Branch**, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act 54 of 2002) (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated **17.02.2026** calling upon the Borrower : **To :1) M/s. K S Silver Article ,** No 3/2-3, 9th Cross, Magadi Road, K P Agrahara, Bangalore-560023.
2) Mrs. Kavitha S (Proprietor) W/o Suresh G, No -9 3rd Cross, 6th Block, Rajajinagar, Bangalore 560010.
3) Mr. Manjunath N (Guarantor and Mortgagor)
4) Mrs. Gangamma (Mortgagor) W/o Manjunath N
No.3 & 4 Are Residing At : No 108, Karekallu, Near SBI Community Hall,Kamakshi Palya, Bangalore 560079.

to repay the amount mentioned in the notice, being **Rs. 5,96,164.78 (Rupees Five Lakh Ninety Six Thousand One Hundred Sixty Four and Paise Seventy Eight only)** and interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **symbolic possession** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 & 9 of the Security Interest Enforcement) Rules 2002 on this **28th day of April 2026.**

The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **Canara Bank, M S Building Branch** for an amount of **Rs. 6,07,578.28 (Rupees Six Lakh Sevene Thousand Five Hundred Seventy Eight and Paise Twenty Eight only**) and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Immovable Property

All that piece and parcel of residential property bearing No 108, situated at Karekallu, Kamakshipalya Ward No 101(18), (PID No 18-76-108) coming under the limits of BBMP, measuring east to west 15.00 feet, and North to South 31.00 feet totally measuring 465 Sq. ft and Bounded on **East by :** House No 107 of Ramaiah and Venkatesh ,**West by :** 3 feet Passage Nagaraj M House Gally and House no 109 ,**North By :** 5 feet Passage Shankarappa House Gally **South By:** Hanumanthappa House.
Name of Title holder : Sri. Manjunath N and Smt. Gangamma

Date : 28.04.2026 — **Authorised Officer**
Place :Bangalore — **Canara Bank**

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-2, KARNATAKA
4th FLOOR, BSNL BUILDINGS, RAJ BHAVAN ROAD BENGALURU-560001

NOTICE FOR SETTLING SALE PROCLAMATION
(See Section 25 to 28 of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1996, read with Rule 48 to 51 of the II Schedule of the Income Tax Act, 1961)
DRC NO: 2342/17 TA 1951/2017 OA NO. 959/2016

In the Matter of:
Punjab National Bank
Erstwhile United Bank Of India, ... CERTIFICATE HOLDER BANK
V/s
SRI NAGESH & OTHERS ... CERTIFICATE DEBTORS.
To,
(CH)
Punjab National Bank
Erstwhile United Bank Of India,
No. 100, Electronic city, Bangalore-560100 **Certificate Holder/ Applicant**
To,
(CD1) Sri Nagesh, S/o Sri Bandigouda,
No.33, 1st Main, 3rd Cross, Goraguntepalaya, Bangalore 560 022.
Also at
(CD1) Sri Nagesh, S/o Sri Bandigouda
46/1, Nayandath Main Road, Vinayaka Layout, Bangalore 560 039
(CD2) Smt. R. Suma, D/o Ramanna,
No. 3978/01, 2nd Cross, B Block, 2nd Stage. Rajajinagar, Bangalore.
(CD3) Sri N. Narayana Reddy S/o Late Nanjunda Reddy,
House No. 3, Chandapura Village, Athibale Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore.
Also at
(CD3). Sri N. Narayana Reddy S/o Late Nanjunda Reddy,
ANR Kalyan Mantap, Bangalore Anekal Road, Near KEB Office, Chandapur, Bangalore 560 081
(CD4). Sri C.N. Shanthakumar, S/o N. Narayana Reddy,
Hotel Keerthana International, 100/1 Chandapura, Hosur Main Road, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore 560 081. **Certificate Debtors ...**

Whereas, in execution of Certificate in **DRC NO: 2342/17 TA 1951/2017 OA NO. 959/2016** drawn up by the presiding Officer, DRT, Bengaluru, the certified Debtor is to pay a sum of Rs. 43,65,107/- (Rupees Forty Three lakhs Sixty Five Thousands One Hundred and Seven Only) along with interest penal interest if any rests from the date of application till the date of realization along with cost and future interest till the date of realization in full, jointly or severally from the Certified Debtor.

The Outstanding Liability as on 22.12.2025 is Rs. 89,49,760.70 (Eighty Nine lakhs Fourty Nine Thousands Seven Hundred Sixty paisa Seventy Only) as per affidavit filed by CHB vide doc. No. 20782/2025 dated 22.12.2025.

Moreover, you have not paid the said amount; the undersigned has ordered the sale of the undermentioned immovable properties against the above-mentioned affidavit filed by CHB. You all are hereby informed that the day on or after 15th day from the date of service of this notice has been fixed for drawing up the proclamation of sale and settling the terms thereof, you all are requested to bring to the notice of the undersigned any encumbrances, charges, claims or liabilities attaching to the said properties or any portion thereof.

SCHEDULE -A- PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of Residential flat bearing No.22 Khatha No. 1984/994 situated at Ground Floor, measuring 1344 sqft each of super built area together with 424 sqft of undivided share, right, title interest in the Residential complex known as "NISARGA KEERTHANA" constructed on

SI No	Sy No	Boundary	Village
1.	103/1 01 Acre 13 guntas 103/2, 14 guntas Khatha No.1984/994	East by : Corridor West by : Flat No.G-23 North By : flat No.G-21 South by : Open to Sky	Chandapura Village Attibele Hobli Anekal Taluk Bangalore Dist.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on 06.01.2026.

SEAL

SD/-,
RECOVERY OFFICER-2, DRT -2

FORM NO. I.T.C.P. 16 [See rule 48 of the Second Schedule To the Income-Tax Act, 1961]

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER - II
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-2, BENGALURU
4th Floor, Telephone House, Raj Bhavan Road, Bengaluru, Pincode- 560001

WARRANT OF ATTACHMENT OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
(See Sections 25 and Sec 29 of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks & Other Financial institutions Act, 1993 read with II Schedule to the Income Tax Act, 1961)
DRC NO: 2342/17 TA 1951/2017 OA NO. 959/2016

In the Matter of:
Punjab National Bank
Erstwhile United Bank Of India, .. CERTIFICATE HOLDER BANK
V/s
SRI NAGESH & OTHERS ... CERTIFICATE DEBTORS.
To,
(CH)
Punjab National Bank
Erstwhile United Bank Of India,
No. 100, Electronic city, Bangalore-560100 **Certificate Holder/ Applicant**
To,
(CD1) Sri Nagesh, S/o Sri Bandigouda,
No.33, 1st Main, 3rd Cross, Goraguntepalaya, Bangalore 560 022.
Also at
(CD1) Sri Nagesh, S/o Sri Bandigouda
46/1, Nayandath Main Road, Vinayaka Layout, Bangalore 560 039
(CD2) Smt. R. Suma, D/o Ramanna.
No. 3978/01, 2nd Cross, B Block, 2nd Stage, Rajajinagar, Bangalore.
(CD3) Sri N. Narayana Reddy S/o Late Nanjunda Reddy,
House No. 3, Chandapura Village, Athibale Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore.
(CD4). Sri N. Nayayana Reddy S/o Late Nanjunda Reddy,
ANR Kalyan Mantap, Bangalore Anekal Road, Near KEB Office, Chandapur, Bangalore 560 081
(CD5). Sri C.N. Shanthakumar, S/o N. Narayana Reddy,
Hotel Keerthana International, 100/1 Chandapura, Hosur Main Road, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore 560 081. **Certificate Debtors ...**
To,
The Authorized officer
Punjab National Bank
Erstwhile United Bank Of India,
No. 100, Electronic city, Bangalore-560022

Whereas, in execution of Certificate in DRC NO: 2342/17 TA 1951/2017 OA NO. 959/2016 drawn up by the presiding Officer, DRT, Bengaluru, the certified Debtor is to pay a sum of Rs. 43,65,107/- (Rupees Forty Three lakhs Sixty Five Thousands One Hundred and Seven Only) along with interest penal interest if any rests from the date of application till the date of realization along with cost and future interest till the date of realization in full, jointly or severally from the Certified Debtor.

The Outstanding Liability as on 22.12.2025 is Rs. 89,49,760.70 (Eighty Nine lakhs Forty Nine Thousands Seven Hundred Sixty paisa Seventy Only) as per affidavit filed by CHB vide doc. No. 20782/2025 dated 22.12.2025.

This is to command you to attach the immovable properties of the said Certificate Debtor as set forth in the Schedule hereunto annexed and unless they shall pay to you the above said sum and the costs of this attachment, to hold the same until further orders from the Recovery Officer.

You are further commanded to return the Warrant on or before 12.03.2026 with an endorsement certifying the day on which and the manner in which it has been executed or why it has not been executed.

SCHEDULE -A-PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of Residential flat bearing No.22 Khatha No. 1984/994 situated at Ground Floor, measuring 1344 sqft each of super built area together with 424 sqft of undivided share, right, title interest in the Residential complex known as "NISARGA KEERTHANA" constructed on

SI No	Sy No	Boundary	Village
1.	103/1 01 Acre 13 guntas 103/2 14 guntas Khatha No.1984/994	East by : Corridor West by : Flat No.G-23 North By : flat No.G-21 South by : Open to Sky	Chandapura Village Attibele Hobli Anekal Taluk Bangalore Dist.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on 06.01.2026.

SEAL

SD/-,
RECOVERY OFFICER-2
DRT -2

ABSTRACT

A short video helps science reporting, but not India's newsroom realities

A brief intervention improves headline accuracy but not critical assessment of scientific claims; however, India's multilingual, fragmented newsrooms, structural pressures, limited literacy, and language barriers mean such solutions must be adapted from within rather than imported

Vasudevan Mukunth

Lara Marie Berger, Anna Kerkhof, and Nikola Noske, 'Improving science literacy in the newsroom: Experimental evidence', PNAS Nexus

Holding back: Younger journalists could feel culturally uncomfortable about critiquing a claim made by a scientist at an IIT or the Indian Council of Medical Research. GETTY IMAGES

Science journalism is an endlessly fascinating enterprise. Being good at it doesn't take more than being a 'decent' writer (as they say), a good journalist, and navigating science and science communication with a good journalist's sensibilities. That said, some shortcuts are available as well, although they are intended for some very specific use cases, as is targeted training aimed at experienced journalists.

On April 21, researchers from the University of Cologne and the ifo Institute for Economic Research published a study in *PNAS Nexus* titled 'Improving science literacy in the newsroom: Experimental evidence'. In the study paper, they described a randomised experiment in which they tested a specific intervention among a couple of hundred professional journalists in Germany.

Specifically, the researchers recruited 260 journalists via the mailing list of the German Journalistic Association and assigned them roughly equally to the test and control groups. Then the journalists were made to watch a seven-minute video that ran through six "checkpoints" based on which the journalists were told they could critically assess scientific studies. These were funding sources, sample sizes, statistical metrics like averages, figures, correlation vs. causation, and visuals. The journalists in the 'test' group had to watch the video for at least three minutes. Those in the test group could not watch the video until they completed the tasks assigned to both groups.

Experimental insight

These tasks were twofold: each journalist received two research studies, (i) for each of which they had to write a headline, and (ii) check news articles based on each study for mistakes.

The researchers found three things. Foremost, journalists in the 'test' group were 28 percentage points more likely to write an accurate headline and 20 percentage points more likely to correctly identify statistical misrepresentations – both relative to journalists in the control group.

Second, while the 'test' group journalists were more sceptical, both they and the control group journalists were no better than chance (50%) at classifying whether an article contained errors.

Third, journalists in the 'test' group wrote more positive headlines that were also less emotional than those written by journalists in the control group. However, they did not write very different headlines in terms of clickbait or density.

In other words, a brief intervention can seemingly significantly improve journalists' own ability to report sensibly on new research, but does little to improve their ability to be a good detective vis-à-vis the work of others. As the researchers wrote in their paper: "Overall, our findings highlight systemic challenges in journalistic science reporting. Even trained professionals struggled to write accurate headlines and critically assess scientific claims, underscoring the economic and societal risks of misinterpreted science. However, our results also demonstrated that a brief, low-cost intervention significantly improved headline accuracy on average."

Aside from the 'effects' reported in the paper, the study is also insightful in terms of what it reveals about science journalism in Indian newsrooms – insights that are otherwise not readily visible. The study's proposed intervention, the video, is simple even as the study's authors are careful about not being simplistic – yet something like that is always going to come apart when it meets the real world, especially the messier world of India.

For instance, the study assumes the journalists on whose behalf it is intervening have a foundational level of literacy. The study paper also says journalists are "typically highly educated": perhaps that is true in Germany, but 'highly' is relative. The video covers concepts like absolute versus relative figures and representative samples. For the journalist to treat these points in a document as checkpoints at which to stop and think, they must already possess the numeracy required to identify them in the first place. This kind of literacy is far from widespread in India, including among journalists.

Second, while the study admits journalists work with deadlines, it may still underestimate a particular reality of most large Indian newsrooms: the generalist reporter – the one who covers multiple beats, such as a scientific paper in the morning and a political rally in the afternoon. And these individuals lack both the time and the resources to investigate a study's methods in detail. In other words, the researchers' video intervention succeeds only at improving a journalist's ability to be accurate; it also doesn't create the conditions that make room for the intervention to be relevant.

Structural pressures

These conditions are increasingly controlled by the news publication's business model. For example, if a publication depends more on revenue from advertisements and operates in a hyper-competitive market, revenue becomes tied to traffic redirected from Google and Facebook, which increases the incentive to have clickbait headlines. The researchers also acknowledge in their paper that a reporter who writes articles doesn't always decide the headline – that often comes from an editor, who may be under pressure, say, to improve the rate at which readers discover the article, which can be done with a headline selected for virality but which even an informed reporter may not have a chance to belay. Third, the intervention is designed to catch misinterpretation, not research fraud. This is relevant to India for two reasons: unlike Germany, scientists from India produce a large volume of 'bad papers', and newsrooms in India are particularly interested in what Indian scientists publish. As a result, science 'filters' in the newsroom often fail when journalists are unable to detect bad papers. Granted, this is difficult to do, but it's not impossible with some training to spot red flags in dubious studies and with some power devolved to reporters to steer clear of those studies.

Perhaps more importantly, it also requires journalists to learn how some parts of the scientific enterprise can be structurally broken without also writing off all of science – and it requires journalists, especially less experienced ones, to believe they are allowed to report science in this way. Younger journalists typically defer significantly to 'The Scientist' or 'The Doctor' and could feel culturally uncomfortable about critiquing a claim made by a scientist at an IIT or the Indian Council of Medical Research – even if they have watched a video implying this is okay to do. A critical approach is more likely to take root when a senior, well-regarded journalist in the same community endorses it as well.

Of course, being able to access research papers will be very helpful. Many of the most impactful studies are behind prohibitively expensive paywalls. India's new 'One Nation, One Subscription' scheme promises public access to many journals' papers in its second phase, which has yet to begin, so journalists currently bank on friendly scientists with access and open-access publications.

Language barrier

This said, in a similar vein, the intervention's strongest application, one where it doesn't fall apart in the real-world, is with regards to university press releases. When scientists at a university publish an important study, the university's press office drafts a press release, ideally but not always in consultation with the scientists, and broadcasts it to interested journalists. These releases often hype the results in order to make the university look very good. This is a serious problem because these press releases, rather than research papers, are often the first time journalists come in contact with the research. If they don't have access to the full paper and only the press release to work from, and the press release doesn't mention the study's sources of funding or the size of its cohort, say, the video's guidelines become meaningless.

That said, when journalists do have access to the full paper, the video intervention offers a good opportunity to check if press releases are always credible.

Next, there's the most Indian problem of all. India is a country of countries and is brimming with languages.

The study was conducted with German journalists with materials in German and English. The history of science is significantly rooted in these languages, which means translating scientific and mathematical terms between German and English is very easy. But it's next to impossible, and will likely be very confusing, to translate from English/German to Marathi or Tamil.

That, finally, lands us on a crucial point: in the country's fragmented, multilingual, resource-constrained media ecosystem, science journalism will not be fixed (inasmuch as it needs to be) by solutions imported from elsewhere.

This is less criticism of the study – the world needs more in the same vein – and more an admission that India's newsrooms must inculcate the habits of scepticism and editorial discipline from within. It's no coincidence that these habits transcend beats, languages, ideologies, and newsrooms.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Adolf Hitler died on this day in 1945. A quiz on the dictator of Germany:

Radhika Santhanam

QUESTION 1
What word meaning 'guide' in German was used to refer to Hitler?

QUESTION 2
In 1923, Hitler attempted to pull off a coup and overthrow the Weimar Republic; the attempt landed him in prison. What was it called?

QUESTION 3
What is the name of the totalitarian dictatorship set up by Hitler from 1933 to 1945?

QUESTION 4
In 1936, the Nazi regime used this international sporting event for propaganda. It wasn't held again until 1948. Which event was this, and what event caused its delay?

QUESTION 5
The Axis Alliance was formed between Hitler, Mussolini, and another leader. Name him.

Visual Question:
If you're a Harry Potter fan, you would have heard of the Chamber of Secrets. But have you heard of the Chamber of Horrors? This statue is found in which museum's chamber of horrors?

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. Which magazine has named the show the greatest television series of the 20th century? **Ans: Time**
2. This is the most famous catchphrase used by the fictional character Homer Simpson. It has been adopted into the English language. What is it? **Ans: "D'oh!"**
3. What is the name of the greyhound and the cat the family owns? **Ans: Santa's Little Helper, Snowball II**
4. What is the name of the character named after the title character of a celebrated series by Satyajit Ray? **Ans: Apu Nahasapeemapetilon**
5. What is the name of the episode that mentions billionaire Donald Trump having been president of the United States at one time and leaving the nation broke? **Ans: Bart to the Future**
Visual: In this image, name the characters from the show. **Ans: From left: Maggie, Marge, Lisa, Homer and Bart**
Early Birds: Pulkit Sathe | Piyali Tuli | Neil Lall | Prem Nath Tiwari | Sadhan Panda

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

"Do you really believe that some of our players actually fixed matches?"

"According to my uncle Pattabhiraman's opinion, match fixing is just not possible."

"By the way, you cannot say, 'According to my uncle Pattabhiraman's opinion. You.'"

"Can't a person express his opinion?"

"Of course, he can. But the thing is, if you want to use 'according to' then you cannot follow it up with 'opinion'. You can say, according to my uncle Pattabhiraman, match fixing is not possible."

"According to Sunil Gavaskar there are only one or two people who are involved in this illegal business."

"According to Ramesh, Sujatha is a born fighter."

"According to me, Ramesh is...."

"....that is not correct. It's always according to somebody else."

"I see."

"If you want to express an opinion, you could say, 'In my opinion, Sujatha is not a fighter.'"

"In my opinion, India should stop playing cricket for some time."

"In my opinion, India does not have any bowlers."

"According to some, India does not have any team spirit."

"I have lost interest in the game of cricket."

"But all those juicy articles in newspapers. They are providing us with lots of entertainments."

"Entertainment. The articles are providing us with entertainment. The word 'entertainment' is an uncountable noun. You cannot say 'entertainments'."

"Really? I went to Goa recently. The place offers all kinds of entertainment. How does that sound?"

"Sounds great. Here is another example. The entertainment that was put up every day was really bad."

"That reminds me. I am supposed to go to St. Stephen's College today. My friend is acting in a play."

"The play may turn out to be really entertaining. You never know."

"I'd better go home and dress up."

"You are dressing up for the college play? But I thought you....."

"....I can't go like this. I have to wear a decent pair of jeans and...."

"....oh, you are going to get dressed and not 'dress up'. When you 'get dressed', you put something on. In other words, you merely change your clothes. For example, Ananya took a shower and got dressed for school."

"In other words, she put on her uniform."

"Before the guests arrived, I got dressed and went downstairs."

"What does 'dressed up' mean?"

"Well, when you 'dress up', you wear special clothes. For example, whenever there is a fancy dress competition, you find a lot of little children dressed up as Krishna."

"During Christmas, you find people dressed up as Santa Claus."

"Yes."

"But tell me, is that the only meaning of 'dress up'? To wear...."

"....it can also mean to wear fancy or smart clothes. Are you going to dress up for the play?"

"Do you think I am out of my mind? Who is going to dress up for a non event like that?"

"In my opinion, you would."

Published in The Hindu on June 20, 2000

Word of the day

Esoteric:
confined to and understandable by only an enlightened inner circle

Synonyms: obscure, difficult, complex

Usage: *The book uses esoteric terms that most readers don't understand.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/esoteric

International Phonetic Alphabet: /esəterɪk/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

State speeds up deportation of foreign nationals involved in criminal activities

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Home Minister G. Parameshwara on Wednesday said that Karnataka has intensified its crackdown on foreign nationals involved in criminal activities and illegal immigration, with a sharp rise in deportations over the past three years.

He said that in 2024, the police deported 339 foreign nationals, with more than 50% of the cases linked to offences under the NDPS Act.

In 2025, a total of 401 individuals were tracked and deported, while in 2026 so far, 427 foreign nationals have been deported.

Of the 427 deportations this year, 286 were Bangladesh nationals, many of whom were sent back by air instead of conventional land routes, indicating a shift towards faster repatriation processes.

Faster process

He noted a significant policy change in handling such cases. Earlier, foreign nationals booked in criminal cases were allowed to remain in the country until the legal process concluded. However, the government has now decided to deport such individuals soon after apprehension, in coordination with the embassies of their respective countries, even without pursuing prolonged criminal proceedings in certain cases.

Parameshwara has said it is aimed at swiftly addressing illegal immigration

Dr. Parameshwara said the move is aimed at swiftly addressing illegal immigration and preventing misuse of legal delays, while ensuring coordination with international authorities.

Student dies after harassment; 3 policemen suspended

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

Three personnel attached to Vidyagiri Police Station in Dharwad were suspended on Wednesday by the Police Commissioner after allegations of police harassment and extortion surfaced following the death of a student.

The names of the suspended personnel were given as head constable Chandru Nadavinamani and constables Kiran Dokkannavar and Syed Tahsildar.

They were suspended on Wednesday after 20-year-old Aditya Myageri was found dead on Monday night.

(If you are in distress or having suicidal tendencies, please reach out to these 24/7 helplines: KIRAN at 1800-599-0019 or Arogya Sahayavani at 104 for help.)

Timings
BENGALURU

THURSDAY, APR. 30	
RISE	06:00 SET 18:34
RISE	17:32 SET 04:45
FRIDAY, MAY. 01	
RISE	05:59 SET 18:34
RISE	18:21 SET 05:23
SATURDAY, MAY. 02	
RISE	05:59 SET 18:35
RISE	19:12 SET 06:03

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	34	15
Mysuru	36	21
Bengaluru	35	24

Bengaluru Today
36°C The weather will be very warm and uneasy. Night will be pleasant. Spell of lightrain and thundershower with gusty winds to occur.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
35°C Morning will be pleasant. Day will be slight hot and uneasy. Night also will be pleasant. Chances of light rain and thundershower.

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THE HINDU
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TTD to buy Nandini ghee

BENGALURU: Bangalore Milk Union Limited will supply two lakh kg of Nandini ghee every month to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams for six months. BAMUL won a ₹136-crore tender for supplying ghee, BAMUL director D.K. Suresh said, flagging off the first van on Wednesday.

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Geetha Ramamoorthi
Global GCC Leader, Former MD, KBR Inc.

Roch Ferreira
Global Vice President & Head of Corporate Marketing, Virtusa Corporation

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01 Australia — 13 DAYS
SYDNEY, Blue Mountain, **MELBOURNE,** Phillip Island, Great Ocean Road, **CAIRNS,** Kuranda, Great Barrier Reef, **GOLD COAST, BRISBANE.**
Dates : AUG 16*, 30. SEP 13, 27. OCT 4, 18. NOV 8, 15, 22. DEC 6, 13.
70222 59008

02 New Zealand — 10 DAYS
Auckland - Rotorua - Queenstown - Lake Tekapo, Mt Cook & Aoraki National Park, Lake Pukaki - Fiordland National Park, Lake Te Anau, Eglinton Valley, Mirror Lakes, Hollyford River, Homer Tunnel & Mitre Peak, Wildlife Spotting, Christchurch.
Dates : AUG 28*. SEP 11, 25. OCT 9, 16, 30. NOV 20, 27. DEC 4.
70222 59008

03 Kailash Manasa Sarovara Yatra — 10 DAYS
By Helicopter & Flight
✓ NEPALGUNJ – SIMIKOT - NEPALGUNJ BY FLIGHT
✓ SIMIKOT – HILSA - SIMIKOT BY HELICOPTER
✓ CHINA - TIBET PART BY COACH
Dates : JUL 4, 12, 25*. AUG 2, 10, 24. SEP 1, 9, 18, 22.
70222 59003

04 Australia & New Zealand — 22 DAYS
Sydney, Melbourne, Cairns, Gold Coast, Brisbane, Auckland, Rotorua, Queenstown, Milford Sound, Lake Tekapo, Mt Cook, Christchurch.
Dates : AUG 16*, 30. SEP 13, 27. OCT 4, 18. NOV 8, 15, 22. DEC 6.
70222 59008

05 England & Europe — 9 / 13 / 16 DAYS
England, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Vatican.
Dates : AUG 11*, 25. SEP 15, 29. OCT 13, 27. NOV 10.
70222 59008

06 Singapore -Malaysia-Thailand — 4 / 5 / 8 / 12 / 16 DAYS
Singapore: Universal Studios, Sentosa Island, Cable Car, Gardens by The Bay, Singapore Oceanarium, Bird Paradise, Predators on Wings, The Karsts, The Cavern, Giant Panda Forest, Tram Ride, Night Safari. **Malaysia:** Kuala Lumpur City Tour, Batu Caves, Genting Highlands, Putrajaya. **Thailand:** Pattaya tour, Coral Island, Alcazar Show, Nong Nooch Village, Bangkok City Tour, Safari World, Marine Park.
Dates : JUN 4, 18. JUL 2*, 16. AUG 6, 13, 20. SEP 3, 17, 24. OCT 1, 15, 29. NOV 5, 19, 26. DEC 3, 10.
74833 66378

07 South Africa — 10 DAYS
Sun City, Pilanesberg, Mabula, George, Mossel Bay, Oudtshoorn, Cape Town, Table Mountain, Hout Bay, Seal Island, Chapmans Peak Drive, Penguins at Boulders Beach.
Dates : AUG 16, 30. SEP 20, 27*. OCT 4, 18. NOV 8, 15, 22. DEC 6, 13.
702225 9008

08 Bali - The Land Of Gods — 5 / 7 / 9 DAYS
Denpasar, Nusa Penida Island, Kintamani, Ubud, Garuda Wisnu Cultural Park, Tanah Lot, Beratan Lake, Ulun Danu, Taman Ayun, Tanjung Benoa Beach, Uluwatu, Besakih, Tirta Empul, Lempuyang Temple, Tirta Gangga, Kings Palace, Bat Caves Temple.
Dates : MAY 4, 11, 18. JUN 1, 15. JUL 6, 20. AUG 3, 17. SEP 7, 14, 21*. OCT 5, 12, 26. NOV 2, 9, 16, 23. DEC 7, 14.
93641 04366

09 Vietnam - Cambodia — 4 / 6 / 7 / 10 / 12 DAYS
Vietnam: Hanoi, Ninh Binh, Halong Bay, Da Nang, Hoi An, Ba Na Hills, Mekong Delta, Ho Chi Minh City, Cu Chi Tunnels. **Cambodia:** Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Angkor Wat, Tonle Sap, Thousand Lingas River.
Dates : MAY 14, 21. JUN 4, 18. JUL 9, 23. AUG 6, 13, 20. SEP 10, 17, 24*. OCT 1, 15, 29. NOV 5, 19, 26. DEC 3, 10
93640 88424

10 Nepal-Mukthinath -Janakpur — 5/9 DAYS
Lumbini, Pokhara, Jomsom, Muktinath, Phewa Lake, Manokamana, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Doleshwar Mahadev, Janakpur etc.
Dates : MAY 7, 21. JUN 4, 18. JUL 9, 23. AUG 13*, 27. SEP 10, 24. OCT 1, 22, 29. NOV 12, 26.
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Namma 112 emergency service gets multilingual AI upgrade

The system can interpret and relay information in real time, helping call handlers respond faster and with greater accuracy

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a first-of-its-kind initiative in India, the Bengaluru City Police have launched a multilingual AI-powered upgrade to its emergency response system, Namma 112, aimed at breaking language barriers during distress situations.

The city police introduced the Multilingual Voice AI for Nationwide Key Interventions (VANKI), an advanced solution that enables callers to communicate in their preferred language while seeking emergency assistance. The system can interpret and relay information in real time, helping call handlers respond faster and with greater accuracy.

Developed in collaboration with Monday Ventures and Aeos, the system currently supports more than 10 languages. K. MURALI KUMAR

The initiative comes in response to Bengaluru's diverse and global population, where residents include people from across India and abroad. Officials noted that language differences often delay emergency response, and the new integration ensures that such barriers no longer hinder access to help.

Developed in collaboration with Monday Ventures and Aeos, the system currently supports more than 10 languages.

These include Indian languages such as Bengali, Gujarati, Odia, Manipuri, Kashmiri, Nepali and Assamese, along with international languages like Spanish, French and Arabic.

Authorities said additional languages will be introduced in phases.

In addition, police officials said the upgraded system will significantly improve response time, clarity in communication and accuracy in deploying emergency services, especially in high-pressure situations.

With this move, the city police said they have reinforced their focus on inclusive and citizen-centric policing, leveraging technology to make emergency services more accessible, efficient and responsive for all sections of society.

No unauthorised vehicle inspections, say police

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka police have issued a strict directive to all its units across the State, warning against unauthorised vehicle inspections by personnel lacking legal authority, following complaints of harassment and misuse of power.

The move comes after a complaint by Mohan Kumar Danappa, a member of the Karnataka State Police Complaints Authority, who highlighted instances of Home Guards, armed police and personnel below the rank of Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) allegedly stopping vehicles, intimidating motorists, and collecting money illegally.

In a circular from K. Parashurama, Commissioner of Traffic and Road Safety, all police commissioners, Superintendents of Police, and traffic authorities have been directed to strictly adhere to the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and the Karnataka Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989.

The directive clarifies that only officers of ASI rank and above are authorised to conduct vehicle inspections and impose penalties.

Constables and head constables may issue notices under Section 133 of the Act, but are not empowered to independently stop and check vehicles in the manner reported.

Serious concerns

The circular flags serious concerns over Home Guards and armed police personnel – particularly those on patrol or driver duty – illegally stopping vehicles, seizing keys, threatening legal action, and in some cases using abusive language or resorting to assault.

Terming such acts unlawful and unacceptable, the police headquarters has directed all field units to carry out special and continuous enforcement drives to curb these practices.

Senior officers have been asked to closely monitor compliance, initiate strict disciplinary action against erring personnel, and issue clear instructions during daily roll calls.

The directive follows rising public complaints over harassment during vehicle checks.

Migrant workers approach KSHRC, claiming arson, illegal detention

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A group of migrant labourers from West Bengal have approached the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission (KSHRC), alleging arson, illegal detention, police assault, and the demolition of their homes in HSR Layout.

According to a complaint, around 25 sheds at Shyam Sundar Palya were set on fire by unidentified miscreants in the early hours of Monday, destroying all belongings, including original documents. The labourers said nine people were inside at the time and narrowly escaped, while an LPG cylinder exploded during the blaze.

The workers alleged that they were detained the following day by police after being labelled as "Bangladeshis". They were taken to the Foreigners Regional Registration Office and later released after establishing their Indian citizenship.

In their petition, the complainants accused police personnel of physical assault, verbal abuse, and confiscation of mobile phones, which have not yet been returned. They further alleged that CCTV cameras at the site were removed.

An inspector allegedly physically assaulted them and used abusive and derogatory language against activist R. Kaleem Ullah, who had arrived to support the workers.

The petition also stated that on Tuesday, while the labourers were still in custody, the police demolished the remaining five hollow-block sheds that had survived the fire.

Public transport must be safe, not a space of fear: HC

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Public transport must remain "a place of safety and dignity, not one of silent fear and exploitation," the Karnataka High Court said.

The court made these observations in a recent order rejecting a petition filed by 28-year-old B.K. Diganth, who is accused of filming voyeuristic videos of women inside the Bengaluru metro and posting them on an anonymous Instagram page, @metro_chicks.

"...to interdict the criminal proceedings at this juncture would not merely truncate the course of justice, but may also embolden similar transgressions, thereby imperilling the safety and dignity of women in public places," Justice M. Nagaprasanna said, pointing out that the contents of the charge sheet – which show that the petitioner's mobile device contained further incriminating material of a similar nature – reinforce the allegations against him.

The court observed that it cannot remain oblivious to the larger societal implications, noting that the materials collected during the investigation disclose sufficient *prima facie* grounds to proceed against the petitioner.

The act of following women, monitoring them and recording their images without consent, which the petitioner allegedly indulged in, falls squarely within the mischief sought to be curbed by Section 78 (stalking) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the court observed.

'Disquieting picture'

The complaint, when read alongside the charge sheet, paints a disquieting picture in which women commuting in the anonymity of public transport were subjected to covert surveillance, with their images and videos captured without consent, focusing on various parts of their bodies and thereafter disseminated on a public digital platform for voyeuristic consumption, the court noted.

"When the investigation materials are read in juxtaposition, they disclose not a trivial lapse, but a pattern of conduct that, if proved, bespeaks a calculated intrusion into the privacy and dignity of unsuspecting women. Such acts, cloaked under the guise of anonymity in crowded places cannot be countenanced," the court observed.

While rejecting this petition against the charge sheet and further criminal proceedings, the court said observations made in this order would not bind or influence the further proceedings before the trial court.

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Senior IPS officers transferred; Labhu Ram is IGP (Intelligence)

The government says the post of Inspector-General of Police (Intelligence) has been declared equivalent in status and responsibilities to the cadre post of Inspector-General of Police, CID

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government on Tuesday issued a notification ordering the transfer and posting of three senior IPS officers with immediate effect. According to the order, Labhu Ram (2004 batch), Inspector-General of Police (Central Range), Bengaluru, has been posted as Inspector-General of Police (Intelligence). The position has been downgraded following the transfer of Ravi

Labhu Ram

S. Mr. Ravi (1998 batch), who was serving as Additional Director General of Police (Intelligence), has been transferred and posted as Additional Director General of Police, Karnataka State Reserve Police (KSRP). He replaces Sandeep Patil, IPS, who has been relieved from holding concurrent charge of the post.

In another key change, S. Girish (2012 batch), Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Anti-Narcotic Task Force, has been transferred and appointed as Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Central Range, Bengaluru, also in a downgraded post vacated by Mr. Labhu Ram.

The government also said that the post of Inspector-General of Police (Intelligence) has been declared equivalent in status and responsibilities to the cadre post of Inspector-General of Police, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) under Rule 12 of the IPS (Pay) Rules, 2016.

The post of Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Central Range, Bengaluru, has been declared equivalent to the cadre post of Deputy Inspector-General of Police, CID, under the same rules.

Major drug network busted; 16 held

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a major anti-narcotics crackdown, the Bengaluru City Police have arrested 16 accused and seized drugs worth ₹36.67 crore across multiple coordinated operations in the city.

The operation, led by the Central Crime Branch (CCB) along with teams from East and West zone police stations, targeted an organised network involved in the trafficking and distribution of narcotic substances. The arrested include four foreign nationals, eight inter-State operatives and four local accused.

The police seized a large quantity of contraband, including 9.064 kg of MDMA, 5.195 kg of hydro ganja, 19,755 LSD strips, 156 grams of heroin, 618 grams of charas, 332 grams of cocaine, 315 grams of drug-laced gummies and 11.47 kg of ganja. Officials said the accused sourced drugs from foreign and inter-State networks at lower prices and supplied them in Bengaluru, particularly targeting college students and young consumers.

The cases have been registered under the NDPS Act, and all 16 accused have been produced before the court and remanded to judicial custody. The coordinated raids were carried out in multiple locations, including Bagalur, Adugodi, Chikkajala, HSR Layout, Yeshwanthpur, Jalahalli and Jnanabharathi police station limits.

The police said further investigation is under way to trace the larger network.

Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara said the State government has intensified enforcement measures, with a sharp focus on protecting youth and dismantling organised drug networks in Bengaluru.

In 2026, so far, the police have registered 1,959 cases under the NDPS Act, including 256 against peddlers and 1,703 against consumers. A total of 2,591 Indian nationals and 21 foreign nationals have been arrested. Drugs worth over ₹130 crore have been seized. Between 2024 and 2026, there has been a steady rise in cases and arrests. Officials also noted that in five major NDPS cases since June 2025, inter-State raids led to the arrest of 10 accused from Kerala, Goa, Maharashtra, New Delhi and Bihar.

CCB's crackdown

The CCB, in 2025 alone, has registered 71 major cases, arrested 112 accused (including 27 foreign nationals), and seized 170.64 kg of narcotics valued at ₹115.49 crore. In 2026 (to date), CCB has registered 197 cases, arrested 267 accused (including six foreign nationals), and seized around 387 kg of drugs worth ₹45 crore.

City tops India's GCC leadership with 15,000 professionals: Report

Shilpa Elizabeth
BENGALURU

Bengaluru has emerged as India's strongest Global Capability Centre (GCC) leadership hotspot, with an active and accessible leadership pool of over 15,000 professionals, shows a report.

Released by Xpheno, a specialist staffing firm, the workforce research report titled 'Bengaluru GCCs: The Leadership Quotient' noted that the city's GCC workforce has an overall leadership density of 1:50, which means that one in every 50 professionals is in a leadership role. Additionally, the experience level of the leadership is mid-heavy, with 59% of all leadership currently in the mid operational leadership layers. Bengaluru GCCs are also net talent positive, attracting and retaining more leaders than they lose to other geographies, the report said.

"Cost arbitrage is no longer the primary driver for GCCs entering India. The focus has decisively shifted to the depth and quality of leadership talent. Bengaluru's strong leadership quotient, backed by scale, experience, and global exposure, continues to make it the most preferred destination for global enterprises setting up capability centers," said Kamal Karanth, co-founder, Xpheno.

The city's GCC leadership pool also recorded 8% annual net growth. For the current outlook of GCC growth in Bengaluru, this could just be a tab below sufficient levels.

The report, however, flags the lack of gender diversity. It was found that less than one-fourth of active leaders were women professionals, well below the desired levels.

Annual Mango Mela set to begin on May 7 as heat delays harvest and reduces yield

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After a delay this year due to heat-induced disruptions to the harvest, the Horticulture Department, along with the Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation Limited (Mango Board), will host the annual Mango Mela in the city starting May 7. The first mela will be held at Cubbon Park from May 7, with mangoes from Bengaluru South (Ramanagara), Tumakuru and Dharwad, as produce from these districts arrives early in the season. This will be followed by another mela at Lalbagh from May 20, featuring mangoes from Kolar, Chickballapur, Belagavi and other districts, Vedamurthy T.R., managing director of the Mango Board, told *The Hindu*. The annual fair at Lalbagh will also host a variety of jackfruit.

Visitors at the 2025 edition of the Mango and Jackfruit Fair, held annually at Lalbagh Botanical Garden. FILE PHOTO

This season, the heat has not only delayed the harvest but also drastically reduced the yield. While farmers were anticipating a surplus this year, the yield is now expected to be around 11 lakh tonnes, compared to the usual 16 lakh tonnes cultivated across 1.5 lakh hectares, as per the board.

He added that up to 40 free stalls will be provided to farmers at Cubbon Park, while around 120-130 stalls will be set up at Lalbagh.

While farmers can expect better prices this year due to the sharp drop in yield, growers of the Totapuri variety, are likely to face losses. "Owing to the ongoing tensions in West Asia, exports are likely to be disrupted," Mr. Vedamurthy said.

Alphonso (Badami) mangoes, which are usually the most in demand, have been particularly affected this year, the official said, adding that the variety usually arrive in the market by mid-April, but the heat delayed harvesting and reduced the yield.

THE HINDU GROUP

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Jal Jeevan Mission: CM accuses Centre of starving State of funds

State, Centre sign MoU on implementing Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0; Siddaramaiah urges Union govt. to release pending dues

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday, on the occasion of signing an MoU with the Centre on Jal Jeevan mission 2.0 in the presence of Union Minister for Jal Shakti C.R. Patil, expressed displeasure over the State not getting its share of funds under the Mission, despite its good performance.

Pointing out that the State has even borne the Central share to implement the project, he urged the Centre to immediately release the pending dues and also reimburse the expenditures to ensure the continuation of the project.

"The Union government has effectively starved Karnataka of funds for over two years, despite making budgetary allocations and the State stepping in to finance even the Centre's share to keep the mission on track," he said.

"Despite the absence of Central support over the past two years, Karnataka has invested ₹17,554.63 crore, including ₹8,880.71 crore towards the anticipated Central share, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to the mission and to the people we serve," he said.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah participating in the MoU signing ceremony for Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 between the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj via video conference, in Bengaluru.

Mr. Siddaramaiah urged the Union government to release the pending funds, including reimbursement of advance expenditures, at the earliest. "This will ensure continuity, sustain momentum, and enable us to collectively achieve the shared national vision of universal, safe, and sustainable drinking water for all rural citizens," he said, while making it clear that Karnataka would remain fully committed to completing all works under the Mission in a time-bound manner.

Second most arid State

"Karnataka, the second most arid State in the country, continues to face structural water stress, compounded by arsenic and fluoride contamination in several regions. In response, we have adopted a long-term, sustainability-driven approach, prioritizing surface water sources and implementing bulk water supply systems to ensure safe and reliable drinking water for every rural household," Mr. Siddaramaiah said, while stressing the importance of Jal Jeevan Mission for the State.

"We have achieved 88.06 lakh functional household tap connections out of 101.31 lakh rural households, reaching 86.93% coverage as of April 2026. Out of 66,344 works undertaken, nearly 48,789 have been physically completed, including 28,809 in-village works and 19,980 works in schools and anganwadis," he said.

Emphasising that the State has been effectively implementing the Mission, he said, "Karnataka is among the first States to implement a comprehensive O&M Policy and Manual. Village Water and Sanitation Committees with gender balance are actively engaged. Digital innovations such as Jeeva Jal application, GIS-based asset management, and real-time monitoring systems are transforming governance. Notably, over 1.51 lakh women have been trained in water quality testing, strengthening community ownership."

The funds have been divided among the corporations, with the KSRTC receiving ₹143.85 crore, BMTC ₹137.24 crore, NWKRTC ₹87 crore, and KKRTC ₹81.91 crore. K. MURALI KUMAR

₹450 crore released as first instalment to clear RTC staff salary arrears in State

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a big relief for employees of the State-run road transport corporations (RTCs), the Karnataka government has sanctioned ₹450 crore as the initial installment to settle long-standing salary arrears.

The decision follows pressure from workers' unions.

The release marks the first step in addressing the backlog of revised wages owed to staff across the four RTCs.

As per an official order issued on April 29, 2026, the sanctioned amount forms part of the total arrears of ₹1,271.92 crore. The dues pertain to the revised pay applicable from January 1, 2021, to February 28, 2023, covering both serving employees and officers, including those formerly associated with KINCO.

The funds have been divided among the corporations, with the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation receiving ₹143.85 crore, Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation ₹137.24 crore, North Western Karnataka Road Transport Corporation ₹87 crore, and Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation ₹81.91 crore.

Earlier, the Joint Action Committee (JAC) of RTC workers' unions had staged protests demanding implementation of wage revisions and payment of pending arrears, prompting the government to act.

Govt. keen to work with students' ideas: Chief Secretary

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Shalini Rajneesh

Addressing students gathered at the Karnataka Geographic Information System (K-GIS) State-Level Exhibition organised by the Karnataka State Remote Sensing Application Centre (KSRSAC), Shalini Rajneesh, Chief Secretary to the government, said that the government would be keen to collaborate with new concepts that the students come up with.

"With simple technological innovations, we can create a huge impact that would lead to better management of our planet. If we don't manage it well, future generations will struggle for even the basics, such as clean air, water, and soil. We are talking about big technologies like AI on one side, while, on the other side, basic survival issues are at stake," Ms. Rajneesh said.

"Any of you with new ideas or concepts are encouraged to collaborate with the relevant departments, be it IT-Bt, industry, agriculture, or horticulture. If you want to pursue your concept note, we will see to it that it gets implemented in the State," she assured the students.

The K-GIS 2.0 State-Level Exhibition and Student Innovation Model Competition is being organised by KSRSAC under the theme 'Technologies for Managing Planet Earth'. Around 150 educational institutions and students submitted concept notes, out of which 43 were shortlisted for the exhibition.

Pointing out that many issues related to natural resources can now be effectively monitored through digital technologies, Ms. Rajneesh highlighted the growing importance of GIS technologies in survey number-level information systems, watershed mapping, water availability assessments, waste disposal management, flood tracking, water storage analysis, lake bed encroachment and rajakaluves.

KSRSAC director Rajesh N.L stated that development has to go with sustainability, and geospatial technology is supporting evidence-based decision-making.

"K-GIS 2.0 was launched recently, and district-level workshops are being held. So far, we have completed the workshops in five districts," he said.

Over 1.40 lakh e-Swathu applications disposed of

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Under the newly-introduced Form 11B, 82,640 applications have been received, which are currently at various stages of approval. FILE PHOTO

The Karnataka government has accelerated the disposal of applications under e-Swathu 2.0 system, with 1,40,719 applications approved and disposed of so far across the State.

Under the newly-introduced Form 11B, 82,640 applications have been received, which are currently at various stages of approval. Officials have been directed to expedite the processing of these applications, states a release from the office of RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge.

Using passport details

Within the next 10 days, the platform will enable submission of applications using passport details for overseas applicants and submission of applications for new layouts through the citizen Interface, the release notes.

A total of 1,52,863 applications have been received under the e-Swathu 2.0 system so far.

Of these, 18,011 applications are pending across various stages of approval, including 7,896 applications at the gram panchayat secretary level; 3,182 applications at the panchayat development officers' level; 4,036 applications at the gram panchayat president/administrator level; and 1,947 applications at the taluk panchayat executive officers' level.

Additionally, 950 applications approved by executive officers are currently pending at the panchayat development officers' level, the release notes.

Speaking on the initiative, Mr. Kharge said: "We have significantly accelerated the pace of application disposal, while simultaneously addressing key technical challenges faced by citizens and officials. We will continue to strengthen the system with new features, including support for overseas applicants, to make it more accessible and user-friendly."

The technical issues faced by citizens during application submission, as well as by officials during the approval process through the Citizen Interface of e-Swathu 2.0, have largely been resolved, the release notes.

The key improvements in the system include provision for submitting applications for new layouts at the gram panchayat level; facility to convert Form 11B accounts into Form 11A; provision to submit applications for multi-storey buildings (apartments); conversion of land extent measurements from gunta/cents to square metres and resolution of issues related to encumbrance certificates (EC), among others.

'Exporters will benefit from IMEC amid West Asia crisis'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Owing to geopolitical tensions in West Asia, connectivity was hindered with the Strait of Hormuz and Suez Canal as the choke points. Now with India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) gaining momentum as alternatives to the choke points, exporters from Karnataka and other States in India stand to gain in the global trade market, observed Kotraswamy M., Commissioner of Central Tax, Bengaluru North, here on Wednesday.

While speaking at a half-day seminar on "Navigating Geo-Political Challenges: Policy Measures and Preparedness to Build Resilience" jointly organised by the Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce (BCIC) and the Indian Institute of Materials Management (IIMM), Mr. Kotraswamy said, "IMEC is now gaining momentum as a more efficient and more reliable pathway, instead of depending on routes like the Suez Canal, the Strait of Hormuz, or even the Cape route which are costly in terms of freight and sailing time."

GST relief

Exporters are currently being provided targeted relief under the 56th GST framework. As exports are treated as zero-rated supplies under GST, the effective tax incidence on exports is 0%, allowing businesses to claim refunds on input taxes paid. Refund mechanisms have also been significantly streamlined, with over 90% of eligible GST refund claims now being processed within 7 days, compared to earlier timelines of 15 to 30 days.

Additionally, under recent GST Council recommendations, automatic refund processing and reduced documentation requirements have cut compliance costs by an estimated 20% to 25% for exporters, thereby improving liquidity and easing working capital pressures, highlighted Mr. Kotraswamy.

State's performance

Speaking at the seminar, Prince Mehra, Deputy Manager, EXIM Bank, noted that the State was the 4th largest exporter in India, contributing around 7% to the country's merchandise exports and recording a steady growth of 7.8% CAGR from FY19 to FY25.

In FY25, Karnataka's exports stood at $30.5 billion, driven by telecom instruments (17.3%) and petroleum (14%), followed by electrical equipment (5%), RMG/apparel (4.7%), electronics (4.2%), coffee (4.1%) and pharmaceuticals (3.8%).

RAICHUR POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
(A JOINT VENTURE COMPANY OF KPCL- BHEL)
(YERMARUS THERMAL POWER STATION)
CIN : U40101KA2009PLC049582

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through e-Procurement Portal)

KPCL/2026-27/PM/WORK_INDENT4122 **DTD 27.04.2026.**

Tender is invited for following work of Raichur Power Corporation Ltd, Yeramarus. The tender shall be submitted through e-Portal website (www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in) under the category works

Refurbishing Of Old/Used Coal Burner Nozzles of 800 MW Boilers for The Year 2026-27. Last date of receipt of Tender: 07.05.2026 at 16:00:00 Hrs. All relevant details are available in the above said e-Portal. Further details can be obtained from the office of the Executive Engineer (BM/MM), RPCL-YTPS, Yeramarus-584134. Mobile-7795663949. Email: eem3rpcl@gmail.com

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No.2, 2/1 & 2/3, Kalidasa Marg, 1st Main Road, Gandhinagar,
Bengaluru - 560009. Phone No. 080-22265383 website:www.kiadb.in

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-09/315/2026-27 Date:29.04.2026

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK KPP Portal Only)

Item Rate Tender under two cover bid system is invited as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Contractors who have got adequate financial resources, suitable construction equipments, technical man power & sufficient past experience for the work mentioned below:

Name of the work: Improvement to Industrial Layout including Reconstruction and resurfacing of 12m & 18m wide roads including flexible pavement, construction of RCC Side Drains, RCC Cross Drainage and Maintenance of Existing drain works in Bommasandra 1st, 2nd & 3rd Phase Industrial Area, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District.

- Last Date & Time for Receipt of Tenders: **15.05.2026** upto **4:00** pm.

Applicants May download bidding documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Chief Engineer-1
KIADB, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/429/CCL/2026-27

The Hindu Group Chairperson Nirmala Lakshman launching *TeenDigest* along with the Group's CEO L.V. Navaneeth, Chief Sales and Distribution Officer Sridhar Aranala, and *The Hindu*'s Editor, Suresh Nambath, in Chennai on Wednesday. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

The Hindu launches tabloid *TeenDigest* for young readers

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Hindu Group on Wednesday launched *The Hindu TeenDigest*, a new weekend tabloid that caters to teenagers.

A revamp of *The Hindu In School* on Sunday, the 32-page edition aims at engaging curious young minds in an age of endless scrolling.

Content ranges from deep dives into science and world affairs, to stories designed to spark creativity.

Core values

Speaking during the launch at *The Hindu* office in Chennai, Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson, The Hindu Group, said that as a publication, "it is vital that we remain culturally significant and reliable, as young people today are caught up in social media and are targets of misinformation".

"Therefore, it is essential that *TeenDigest* instils the core values of *The Hindu*. It is also a vulnerable age, where you are discovering your identities and want to know what choices to make. We hope this serves as a guide," she said.

Gokul C., Editor of *In School* and *TeenDigest*, said, "Going forward, we hope we can give children what they want in terms of quality content, especially at a time when social media access is being curtailed and there is a lot of discussion on what is coming out from there."

Suresh Nambath, Editor, *The Hindu* and L.V. Navaneeth, CEO, The Hindu Group, were present at the launch.

Sridhar Aranala, Chief Sales and Distribution Officer, *The Hindu*, said *TeenDigest* has been thoughtfully crafted for young readers. The weekend tabloid is priced at ₹50. To subscribe, visit www.thehindu.com/teendigest

Courts cannot reform faith, says SC in Sabarimala review

Religion must mend itself to stay relevant, say women who entered Kerala temple to enforce right to worship under a 2018 verdict; religious practices must harmonise with social reform, they say

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said courts cannot herald reform in religion even as senior advocate Indira Jaising, appearing for two women who made history by entering the Sabarimala temple in Kerala to enforce their right to worship under a 2018 top court verdict, said religion must mend to remain relevant.

> A person can say a temple is a denomination and only certain people can enter that temple... This would lead to complete balkanisation of Hinduism when the history of the country is that of unification. The Indian Constitution protects every religion, every faith
>
> **INDIRA JAISING**
> Senior advocate

Appearing before a nine-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Ms. Jaising opened submissions for respondents supporting the 2018 verdict, which upheld the right of menstruating women aged between 10 and 50 to enter and pray at the Lord Ayyappa temple.

"Social reform includes the reform of religion," Ms. Jaising said. She dismissed the contention that courts could not review religious practices challenged as discriminatory.

Justice B.V. Nagarathna pointed out that the petitioners, who have sought a review of the Sabarimala verdict, had argued that reform cannot hollow out a religion out of existence. The judge said there ought to be a balance between reforms which actually benefit and those which were intrusive and made inroads into doctrinal and religious matters.

Ms. Jaising, assisted by advocates Prashant Padmanabhan and Paras Nath Singh, said the Constitution had to be read out as a whole. One cannot make the right to equality under Article 14 and the right to dignity under Article 21 subservient to the freedom of religion. Religious practices must harmonise with social reform. The Constitution must be read as a whole, and not in bits and pieces. The Constitution was the conscience of the Supreme Court. The morality of the Constitution must govern the decisions of the court, the senior advocate argued.

"A person can say a temple is a denomination and only certain people can enter that temple... This would lead to complete balkanisation of Hinduism when the history of the country is that of unification. The Indian Constitution protects every religion, every faith," she said.

Railway worker booked for assault on train

The Hindu Bureau
RENTACHINTALA

A railway worker attached to onboard services on the Visakha Express has been booked on a charge of raping a woman passenger during a journey from Visakhapatnam to Secunderabad on Sunday, the police said.

The woman lodged a complaint at the Rentachintala police station in Palnadu district on Tuesday, and an FIR was registered. The case has since been transferred to the Government Railway Police (GRP) for further investigation.

According to the police, the accused was engaged in supplying bedsheets and other services in air-conditioned coaches. He allegedly approached the woman and her husband while they were seated near a toilet in a general compartment and persuaded them to move to an AC coach, citing better seating arrangements.

The couple had boarded the train at around 4 p.m. on April 26 from Visakhapatnam and were travelling to Rentachintala for a local festival, the police said.

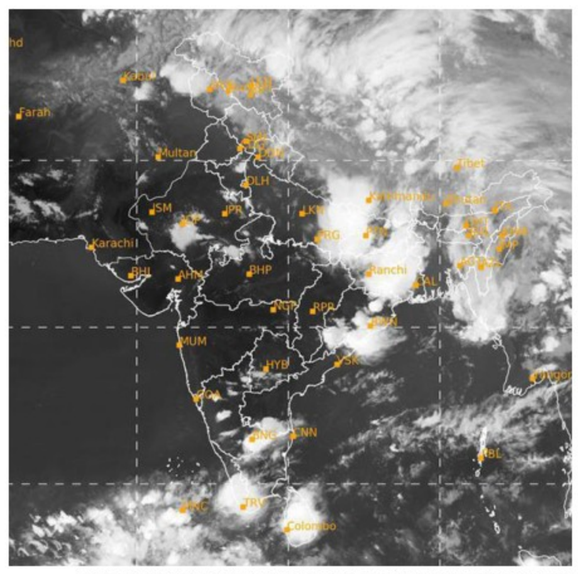
"Taking advantage of the situation, the accused reportedly lured the woman into an AC coach on the pretext of providing a seat. He then allegedly locked the compartment and committed the crime," a senior police officer said.

The woman reported the incident to local authorities after reaching her destination.

"Since the suspect is associated with railway services, identification and arrest are expected soon," the officer said.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.15 HRS)

Forecast for Thursday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, West Bengal, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Mahe. Hot and humid weather likely at isolated places over Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Karaikal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	74	22.2	20.4	Kozhikode	—	37.4	28.6
Ahmedabad	—	42.6	26.2	Kurnool	—	41.1	28.4
Aizawl	24	21.4	16.0	Lucknow	—	39.3	27.3
Allahabad	—	41.0	27.8	Madurai	—	40.2	28.1
Bengaluru	—	37.3	24.4	Mangaluru	—	34.7	25.0
Bhopal	—	43.7	25.2	Mumbai	—	35.1	25.6
Bhubaneswar	—	38.7	25.6	Mysuru	—	36.4	22.6
Chandigarh	1.6	36.5	21.0	New Delhi	—	37.1	20.4
Chennai	—	39.3	28.8	Patna	—	36.5	24.4
Coimbatore	—	37.6	26.0	Port Blair	—	33.6	26.3
Dehradun	—	33.4	21.2	Puducherry	—	36.4	28.5
Gangtok	92	15.4	13.6	Pune	—	39.8	25.4
Goa	—	35.4	28.6	Raipur	—	43.2	29.8
Guwahati	35	25.2	22.5	Ranchi	6	38.6	24.0
Hubballi	—	38.0	23.0	Shillong	7	19.3	13.5
Hyderabad	—	40.4	28.5	Shimla	1.8	25.0	15.8
Imphal	—	23.5	19.1	Srinagar	0.1	16.7	11.7
Jaipur	—	41.0	28.7	Thiruvananthapuram	2	34.9	25.9
Kochi	15	32.6	26.8	Tiruchi	—	40.1	28.0
Kohima	—	22.0	16.0	Vijayawada	—	37.9	28.6
Kolkata	—	33.0	27.6	Visakhapatnam	—	33.5	27.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.43	..18	108	56	...113	
Bengaluru	..—	..24	...3	...141	...147	
Chennai	...5	4	.36	53	41	
Delhi	.20	126	.75	95	...205	
Hyderabad	.16	..17	.24	79	...103	
Kolkata	.17	..13	.47	37	46	
Lucknow	.11	..29	.21	...244	...167	
Mumbai	...1	..29	.14	...159	...154	
Pune	..—	..23	102	43	68	
Visakhapatnam	.25	..40	.13	34	...108	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Kaithal, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 334 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 14

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Govt of Karnataka
O/o OF DIST HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE SERVICES, BALLARI. Telephone: 08392 -276250
e-mail: dhobellari@gmail.com

No:DHOB/Accts-2/OutSource/01/2026-27 **Date: 27-04-2026**

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

The District Health & Family Welfare Officer and TIA, Ballari, hereby invite e-tenders from eligible bidders for the providing manpower outsource services to various health institutions of DH&FWS, Ballari under ZP Fund for the year 2026-27. The schedule of events for the said e-tender notification is detailed below.

The details of the same can be viewed from e-procurement portal of government of Karnataka https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal-home.

1.Tender must be submitted online through KPPP e- portal on or before: 11/05/2026 @ 05:00 PM.
2.e-Tender Amount Rs.207.03 Lakhs.
3.Tender Indent No: DHFWS/2026-27/SE2204.

Sd/- District Health & Family Welfare Officer, Ballari & TIA.
DIPR/Ballari/2026-27/KSMCA/RO No/100

STATE ELECTION COMMISSION, KARNATAKA
Ground Floor (West Wing) and 3rd Floor, No. New. 1/1-1, Palace Road, Bengaluru-560001,
email: sec.karnataka@ka.gov.in , Ph: 080-22205189/193

No.:SECK/ADMN/ETND/2/2026-ADMN **Date:29-04-2026**

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

An e-tender has been invited through the KPP portal **(Tender No.KSEC/2026-27/SE0005/CALL-2)** for printing of State Voter Identity Cards (SVIC) to the voters of 5 Corporations under the GBA, for the office of the Karnataka State Election Commission. The tender can be submitted through the e-portal by dated: **06-05-2026 time 5.20 pm.** Details related to the tender can be obtained from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** or the above office can be contacted during office hours.

Sd/- Section Officer, State Election Commission, Karnataka.

DIPR/CP/JA/427/2026-27

HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT
ENGINEERING WING
Office of the Chief Engineer, Arogya Soudha, 3rd floor, Leprosy Hospital Premises, 1st Cross, Magadi Road, Bengaluru-560 023,
Telephone No.**080-29557023**, E-mail: **cekhsdrp@gmail.com**

No: HFWD/EW/CE/TA-1/AE-2/TND/TLH/2026-27/240 Date: 29.04.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Chief Engineer, HFWD, Engineering Wing, Bengaluru invites tender from eligible Contractors registered in KPWD in two Cover tender document system in KPP Portal for **"Construction of 100 Bedded Taluk Level Hospital at Kushalnagara, Kushalnagara Taluk, Kodagu District."** Approximate Amount put to tender: **Rs. 2870.00 Lakhs.** Earnest Money Deposit: **Rs. 28.70 Lakhs.** Stipulated period for Completion: **18 Months (including monsoon).**

Calendar of Events: (1) Last date for receipt of tenders: **29.05.2026 up to 16.00 hrs. (2)** Date of Opening of Tenders (Technical Bids): **30.05.2026 at 16.01 hrs.**

The tender details can be downloaded from the KPP Platform. Tenders shall be submitted electronically at **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** and Tender Processing Fee shall also be paid electronically. Interested eligible contractors shall register on the KPP Platform to participate in this tender.

NOTE: (1) All the rights are reserved by the undersigned for postponement or cancellation of entire tender process, rejection of bids/individual bid etc., without assigning any reason. **(2)** Henceforth, any changes in the schedule/contents will not be published through newspapers and further changes will be updated only on KPP Portal.

Sd/- Chief Engineer, H&FWD, Engineering Wing, Bengaluru.

BHARAT COKING COAL LIMITED
(A Mini Ratna Company)
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

NOTICE

All the tenders issued by Bharat Coking Coal Limited (B.C.C.L.) for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of **B.C.C.L. "www.bcclweb.in"**, Coal India Limited (CIL) e-procurement portal **"https://coalindiatenders.nic.in"** and Central Public Procurement Portal **"https://eprocure.gov.in"**. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM Portal **"https://gem.gov.in"**.

This is applicable to all Open (Domestic / Global) Tenders issued through e-procurement portal of CIL.

This information is also available on BCCL website www.bcclweb.in

Directorate of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra
Head Off.: 4th FLOOR, Sakhar Bhavan, Plot no. 230, Ramnath Goenka Marg Nariman Point, Mumbai-400021
Tel.: 91-22-69107600, 91-22-69107604 **E-mail:** asdtourism.pub-mh@gov.in

TENDER NOTICE

Directorate of Tourism is inviting proposals for the following project via its e-tendering system from pre-qualified organizations. Details of the project are as follows details are as below:

Project: Selection of Agency for Design, Deployment and Management of Interactive Mascot.

E-Tender Schedule:

Period for downloading and submitting tenders online – **29.04.2026 (04:00 PM) to 14.05.2026 (04:00 PM)**
Date and time of opening of Technical proposal – **15.05.2026 (04:00 PM)**
Corrigendum - **The above e-tender notices and corrections will be displayed online only.**

Detailed tender instructions and e-tender information are available from the following website **www.mahatenders.gov.in**

Sd/- **Director DoT, Mumbai**

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that our client intends to purchase the properties, more fully set out in the schedule given herein below and collectively referred as the "Schedule Property", from its respective owners. Any person/s whomsoever having any rights, title, interest or claim in the Schedule Property or any part thereof, in any manner or objecting to such sale in favour of our client should write to the undersigned within Ten (10) days of issuance of this public notice with all documentary proof on which they are basing their rights with regard to the Schedule Property or portion thereof. If no claims or objections are received within the stipulated time, then it shall be deemed that the property is free from any acts of encumbrances or claims whatsoever of any nature with regard to the Schedule Property and our client shall proceed with completion of such transaction.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL of the properties with such extents as detailed below, all situated at Nerlahalli Village, Manchenahalli Hobli, Manchenahalli Taluk, Chikkaballapura District and bounded and bounded as follows:

Survey No.	Extent		Owners Name	Boundaries			
	Acres	Guntas		East	West	North	South
12/3	....	18	Vidya S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No.12/4	Land bearing Survey No.14/1	Land bearing Survey No.12/2	Land bearing Survey No. 14/1,14/8
12/4	...	14	Vidya S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No. 12/2	Land bearing Survey No. 12/3	Land bearing Survey No. 12/2	Land bearing Nos. 14/8, 13/1, 13/8, 13/2
13/1	...	18	Vidya S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No. 13/8	Land bearing Survey Nos. 14/2, 14/8	Land bearing Survey Nos. 12/4	Land bearing Survey Nos. No.15
13/2	....	31	Vidya S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No. 13/6	Land bearing Survey No. 13/8	12/2, 12/4	13/4, 13/5
13/3	....	20	Vidya S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No 13/5	Land bearing Survey No 13/8	Land bearing Survey No 13/4	Land bearing Survey No.20
13/4	....	20	Vidya S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No 13/5	Land bearing Survey No 13/8	Land bearing Survey No 13/2	Land bearing Survey No 13/3
13/8	....	18	Vidya S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No 13/2, 13/4, 13/3	Land bearing Survey No 13/1	Land bearing Survey No 12/4	Land bearing Survey No 15
14/1	....	28.08	Vidya S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No 12/3 14/8	Land bearing Survey No 26	Land bearing Survey No 12/2	Land bearing Survey No 14/3,14/4, 14/5, 14/6, 14/7
14/2	01	....	Vidya S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No No. 13/1	Land bearing Survey No No. 14/3	Land bearing Survey No No. 14/8	Land bearing Survey No No. 15
14/4	...	11	Deepa S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No 14/3	Land bearing Survey No 14/5	Land bearing Survey No 14/1	Land bearing Survey No 15
14/5	0	11	Deepa S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No 14/4	Land bearing Survey No 14/6	Land bearing Survey No 14/1	Land bearing Survey No 15
14/6	....	11	Deepa S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No 14/5	Land bearing Survey No 14/7	Land bearing Survey No 14/1	Land bearing Survey No 15
14/8	....	28.08	Deepa S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No 13/1	Land bearing Survey No 14/1	Land bearing Survey No 12/3, 12/4	Land bearing Survey No.14/2
15	3	05	Deepa S Rai Daughter of Dr. Seetharam Rai	Land bearing Survey No 13/3	Land bearing Survey No 20	Land bearing Survey No 14/2, 14/3, 14/4, 14/5, 14/6	Land bearing Survey No 20

H M Harsha
UniLegal - Advocates and Attorneys
No.511, Ground Floor, 9th Cross, 6th Main, Sadashivanagar, Bangalore - 560 080. Phone: +91 98443-90581
E-mail: harsha@unilegal.in

Date:29-04-2026

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www.thehindugroup.in/subscribe

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಪಟ್ಟಣ ಪಂಚಾಯಿತಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಬೋಗಾದಿ
ಮೈಸೂರು ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು ಮತ್ತು ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ-570026, ದೂ:0821-2331099 Web:www.bogaditown.mrc.gov.in
ಇ-ಮೇಲ್: itstaff_ulb_bogadi@yahoo.com

ಸಂ:ಪ.ಪಂ.ಬೋಗಾದಿ/ಅ.ಶಾ/ಟೆಂಡರ್.ಸಿ.ಆರ್.01/2026-27 ದಿನಾಂಕ:28.04.2026

ಇ-ಪೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಬೋಗಾದಿ ಪಟ್ಟಣ ಪಂಚಾಯಿತಿ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ಅನುದಾನದಡಿ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಲು, ಪಟ್ಟಣ ಪಂಚಾಯಿತಿ ಕಛೇರಿ ಉಪಯೋಗಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಮಾಸಿಕ ಬಾಡಿಗೆ ಆಧಾರದ ಮೇಲೆ ವಾಹನ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡಲು, **Implementing the Animal Birth Control (ABC) / Anti Rabies Vaccination (ARV) Programme for Stray Dogs** ಮತ್ತು ಪಟ್ಟಣ ಪಂಚಾಯಿತಿ ಕಛೇರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಡೇಟಾ ಎಂಟ್ರಿ ಆಪರೇಟರ್, ಲೆಕ್ಕಿಗರು ಮತ್ತು ಜೂನಿಯರ್ ಪ್ರೋಗ್ರಾಮರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಹೊರಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಮೂಲಕ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡಲು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕತೆ ಆಧ್ಯಾದೇಶ 1999 ಮತ್ತು ನಿಯಮಗಳು 2000ದಂತೆ ಅರ್ಹ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ದಾರರುಗಳಿಂದ, ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕ ಇಲಾಖೆ ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಅರ್ಹ ಮಾನವ ಸಂಪನ್ಮೂಲ ಸರಬರಾಜುದಾರರಿಂದ ಹಾಗೂ ವಾಹನ ಸರಬರಾಜುದಾರರಿಂದ **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಆಸಕ್ತ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

1. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕಡೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ:**13.05.2026 ಸಂಜೆ 5.30 ಗಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ**
2. ಕ್ರಮ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 01ರ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯ ಪೂರ್ವಭಾವಿ ಸಭೆ **ದಿನಾಂಕ:08.05.2026, ಅಪರಾಹ್ನ 3.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ**
3. ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ **ದಿನಾಂಕ:15.05.2026ರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ** ಅಥವಾ ಮುಂದೆ ಸೂಚಿಸುವ ದಿನಾಂಕದಂದು ತೆರೆಯಲಾಗುವುದು

ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ	ವಿವರ	ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂ ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)	ಇ. ಎಂ.ಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂ ಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)
01	DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT52473/CALL-2 (Cat-I)	100.00	84,750
02	DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK INDENT54731/CALL-2	5.00	12,500
03	DMA/2025-26/SE7271	4.20	10,500
04	DMA/2025-26/SE7232/CALL-2	9.28	23,200
05	DMA/2025-26/SE6648/CALL-2	15.00	37,500
06	DMA/2026-27/OW/WORK INDENT57504	15.00	37,500
07	DMA/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT57505	15.00	37,500
08	DMA/2026-27/WS/WORK INDENT57506	4.90	12,250

ಸೂಚನೆ:1. ಕಾರಣಾಂತರಗಳಿಂದ ಮೇಲೆ ತಿಳಿಸಿದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಿನಾಂಕಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಇತರೆ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗಳಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗೆ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** . ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು

ಸಹಿ/- ಮುಖ್ಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿ
ಪಟ್ಟಣ ಪಂಚಾಯಿತಿ, ಬೋಗಾದಿ

ವಾಸಾಸಂ೫/ಮೈಸೂರು/122/ತಿರಡಿ ಸಾಮ/2026-27

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)

No. CEE/T&P/SE-2/2026-27/873-85 Date:29.04.2026

BRIEF SHORT-TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPPP mode only)

KPTCL invites Bids on electronic mode for the following works against following enquiry numbers on Partial Turnkey Basis:

Enquiry No's. and Name of the works

(1) KPTCL/2026-27/SS/WORK_INDENT3679

Establishing 1x20 MVA,110/33kV & 2x20MVA, 110/11kV sub-station at **Anthapura village** with Construction of associated line for a distance of **14.98 Kms** in Sandur Taluk, Ballari District and 2 no's. Terminal Bays at 110/11kV KIADB Kuduthini sub-station in Ballari Taluk, Ballari District.

(2) KPTCL/2026-27/SS/WORK_INDENT3680

Establishing 2x20MVA, 110/11kV sub-station at **Sandur town (Doulathpura)** with associated line for a distance of **0.416km** in Sandur Taluk, Ballari District.

(3) KPTCL/2026-27/SS/WORK_INDENT3681

Establishing 2x20MVA, 66/11kV sub-station at **Bandri Village** along with associated lines and terminal bays in Sandur Taluk, Ballari District.

The bids will be received through electronic tendering mode only. The details regarding participation in the e-tendering process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink **"E Procurement KPTCL"** or **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after 06.05.2026 at 15:00 hrs.** Last date & time for receipt of Bids and any extension of Due date for Bid submission will be intimated in the Karnataka Public Procurement portal. Any details required in this regard can also be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

All Corrigendum/Addendums shall be noticed by the bidders before the last date of submission of the Bids.

Sd/- Chief Engineer, (Electy) Tendering & Procurement, KPTCL, 9th Floor, Indhana Bhavan, A.R. Circle, Bengaluru-560009.

Compounding gains

The New Zealand Free Trade Agreement builds on seven recent FTAs

The India-New Zealand Free Trade agreement (FTA) signed on Monday might look underwhelming when viewed in isolation, but is nevertheless significant when looking at what has been happening over the last five to six years. This impression is because New Zealand's economy is one-sixteenth the size of India's, and makes up less than 1% of India's total trade. Yet, this view ignores the fact that the FTA comes soon after the signing of, or closure of negotiations on, seven other trade agreements in the past three and a half years or so. It also ignores the larger policy goals that India is trying to achieve through such deals. The COVID-19 pandemic and the U.S. tariff frictions have shown India that it needs to diversify supply chains on the import and export sides. Weaning off imports from China is a tough task. Yet, any chipping away of the 16% of India's imports that China accounts for would be welcome. Importantly, the strategic need to diversify export destinations, especially while the mercurial Donald Trump is in charge of India's largest export market, is clear and urgent. The trade deals with Mauritius, the UAE, Australia, the EFTA nations, the U.K., the EU, Oman, and now New Zealand all provide Indian exporters opportunities that they should take advantage of. Finally, dismissing this FTA on the basis of its size would be unfair to India's negotiators who have done well to use India's comparative advantage to push through key victories.

The first key strength of the FTA for India, and unprecedented, is that New Zealand will remove all goods tariffs immediately on execution of the agreement. The second strength is that India managed to avoid providing any concessions on any of its sensitive sectors. Key among these exclusions is dairy, something New Zealand had been especially keen to include. The third positive is New Zealand's commitment to facilitate investments in India worth $20 billion over 15 years. This is similar to the provisions in the EFTA trade pact, wherein the four EFTA countries committed to facilitate $100 billion of investments in India over 15 years. To be sure, these are commitments to facilitate and not commitments to invest, but getting them included in the text of the deal is nevertheless significant. To help this along, India will create a dedicated desk to address any issues New Zealander investors might face. Such a targeted approach to foreign investment is necessary if India wants to achieve the multiple goals of weaning off China, increasing and diversifying exports, creating jobs, bolstering the capital account, and generally increasing incomes. The other long-standing need of helping domestic manufacturers scale up remains a sticky problem.

Cart before horse

Roads need upgrade before tech solutions can reduce accidents

India is, in many respects, a country in transition and thus suffers varieties of a common chicken-and-egg problem: it adopts solutions that are only feasible at scale but struggles to operationalise that scale. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is set to introduce vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communication technology that will allow vehicles on the road to send and receive data about their location and movement vectors, in a bid to improve road safety. This seems credible at a time when road accidents are increasing in India. A spate of accidents in April in Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh killed more than 50 people. The Supreme Court of India took *suo motu* cognisance of two similar incidents in 2025 and, on April 26, asserted that the state must proactively enforce the constitutional right to life and remove any obstructions in highways' right of way. However, V2V is unlikely to help as its hardware demand is non-trivial relative to what exists, yet is crucial. V2V is part of the wider V2X, or vehicle-to-everything, technological scheme in which vehicles communicate with other infrastructure (V2I), such as traffic lights and tolling, and pedestrians (V2P), aside from V2V. However, India currently lacks the interoperability and backend systems to operationalise it. In fact, the Ministry has yet to specify the key, akin to the 'language' vehicles broadcast in, Indian V2V will use – DSRC or C-V2X – and has unsurprisingly spurred public concern.

Vehicle owners already face steep compliance costs, including having to pay for vehicle location tracking devices and high-security registration plates, sans subsidies or a competitive vendor market to defray the higher cost of approved devices. In the V2V network, each vehicle is a node where data are processed and interpreted for the driver. However, many commercial drivers are not used to driving environments with interfaces and are under-trained to interpret vehicle alerts. This raises the prospects of bad actors intercepting communications to send false warnings or trigger unnecessary braking, in the absence of strong security protocols, and of network channel congestion (5.9 GHz is the international standard) and packet loss. More fundamentally, the country lacks proper road design, routing, and speed control while road use is dominated by two-wheelers, pedestrians, and non-motorised traffic. If a city is not 'smart', a 'Smart City' solution such as V2V will be marginal at best. It will also be more useful when more users adopt it, but at present, early adopters will bear the full cost while enjoying underwhelming benefits. If the technology is to help mitigate the deadliness of India's roads, the Ministry must slowly roll out both infrastructure and training, with phased mandates and subsidies, first.

The war on Iran and the Gulf's shattered illusions

Shashi Tharoor

Fourth-term Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha (Congress party) for Thiruvananthapuram, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs and the Sahitya Akademi Award-winning author of 29 books, including 'Pax Indica' (2012) and 'The New World Disorder' (2020)

Wars are rarely confined to the battlefields where they erupt. Their shockwaves ripple outward, reshaping economies, societies and the narratives nations tell about themselves. The war in Iran has been no exception. It has left behind not only a devastated country but also a region forced to confront the fragility of its prosperity and the precariousness of its stability. What will emerge from this conflict is not simply a wounded Iran, but a Gulf stripped of its long-cherished image as a safe haven for capital, entrepreneurship, and migrants – and a broader region, including India, in peril.

A nation left gutted

All reports indicate that Iran today is a country physically broken. The war has reduced once-thriving cities to rubble, obliterated industrial zones, and crippled vital infrastructure. Power grids flicker unreliably, refineries lie in ruins, and transport networks are severed. The destruction is not limited to the material; it extends to the very architecture of governance. The decapitation of Iran's leadership has left ministries paralysed, security forces fragmented, and the chain of command in disarray. Assets painstakingly built over decades – military stockpiles, oil terminals, cultural institutions – have been degraded or destroyed. What remains is a nation gutted, its capacity to govern and protect itself gravely diminished.

The human toll is equally staggering: Millions displaced, communities uprooted, and generations scarred by violence. The war has not only destroyed buildings and bridges but also eroded the social fabric that held the country together. Trust in institutions has collapsed, and the sense of national cohesion has been vitiated by fear, uncertainty, and resentment.

The devastation within Iran has triggered economic consequences far beyond its borders. Fuel prices have surged as crude exports collapsed, sending tremors through global markets. Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG) shortages everywhere ripple through supply chains, disrupting industries that depend on steady energy flows. Factories in South Asia and East Africa have shuttered due to scarcity, disrupting supply chains and raising costs for Indian manufacturers, while restaurants from Dubai to Delhi struggle to keep stoves lit. Inflation bites hardest at the working class, who cannot hedge against volatility.

The Gulf, long seen as a stabilising energy hub, has been compromised. Its ability to reassure global markets of steady supply has been shaken, exposing the fragility of global dependence on hydrocarbons concentrated in one volatile region. The war has revealed how quickly prosperity can unravel when the foundations of security are undermined and the promise of stability, the Gulf's greatest asset, fractures.

> The war has rattled the Gulf, shattering the illusion of stability and economic resilience

The Gulf is vulnerable

For decades, the Gulf cultivated an image of prosperity: gleaming skyscrapers, bustling free zones, a magnet for capital, entrepreneurship, and migrant labour. That narrative now lies considerably tarnished. The war has exposed the region's vulnerability, undermining confidence in its ability to remain a safe haven. Businesses reconsider expansion, and capital flows hesitate. Gulf labour, the backbone of India's remittance economy, faces uncertainty as employers tighten budgets and scale back projects, leaving migrants and their families in India anxious about livelihoods. Transit travel through Dubai, the world's most reliable hub, now feels precarious, as airlines reroute, passengers face delays, and the aura of effortless connectivity is replaced by anxiety. Investments from the Gulf's sovereign wealth funds are shadowed by doubt, their portfolios no longer symbols of confidence and permanence. Trade routes, too, are unsettled: Indian exporters who relied on Gulf ports as gateways to Africa and Europe now confront delays, higher insurance premiums, and diminished confidence in the region as a secure conduit for global commerce. The war has unsettled not only the movement of people and goods but also flows of capital, undermining the very foundations of the Gulf's promise as a safe haven for globalisation – and exposing India's deep entanglement with that promise.

The psychological blow is as significant as the economic one. Investors and entrepreneurs had long believed that the Gulf was insulated from the turbulence of its West Asian neighbours, a place where capital could thrive under the protection of strong states and predictable policies. That belief has been shattered. The war has shown that even the Gulf, with all its wealth and ambition, cannot escape the destabilising effects of regional conflict.

When the guns finally fall silent, Iran's regime will still be standing, albeit diminished, but the country will be devastated: its borders porous and internal order fragile; its economy battered, with oil revenues diminished and industries in ruins; its government weakened, its new leadership untested, and quite probably likely to be more hardline and repressive, focused as it will be on survival rather than reform. This last prospect is particularly troubling. History suggests that governments born in crisis often cling to power through coercion rather than consensus. Iran's bruised new rulers may resort to repression at home and aggression abroad. They may seek to lash out asymmetrically – through cyber warfare, proxy militias, or global disruption – leveraging the few tools left to project influence through its capacity for regional disruption. The risk of instability radiating outward is real. The Gulf states, which invited U.S. bases onto their soil to enhance their own security, might now find the American presence only invites further attack and subversion.

Yet, is there a more hopeful scenario? Could reconstruction, however slow, open space for renewal? Might regional actors, even absent American support or Israeli intrusion, find common cause in rebuilding a shattered neighbour to prevent chaos from spilling over? The answer remains uncertain. What is clear is that the war has rewritten the Gulf's story: from a beacon of stability to a region grappling with fragility, volatility, and the spectre of prolonged unrest.

Once the Americans have flown away

Hope lies in the possibility of regional cooperation. The Gulf states, despite their own vulnerabilities, have the resources and the incentive to prevent Iran's collapse from spilling over into their territories. Reconstruction could become a shared project, not out of altruism but out of necessity. A stable Iran, even if weakened, is preferable to a chaotic one capable of exporting instability. The challenge will be to overcome mistrust and rivalry, and to see in Iran's devastation not an opportunity for dominance but a warning of shared fragility.

The war in Iran has left behind more than ruins; it has shattered illusions. The Gulf is no longer the untouchable safe haven it once claimed to be. Iran is no longer a formidable regional power but a wounded state struggling to survive. The region as a whole faces a crossroads: it can either descend into a cycle of instability and retaliation, or it can seize the opportunity to build a new narrative of cooperation and resilience. India can play a constructive role, leveraging its good relations with the Arab states and its historic ties to Iran, to serve as a bridge for reconstruction rather than watching as the region spirals into dysfunction and despair.

One lesson is undeniable: prosperity built on fragile foundations cannot endure. The Gulf must now confront the reality that its future depends not only on wealth and ambition but also on stability and cooperation. Whether it can rise to that challenge, once the Americans have flown away, depends on all of us in the region who have an interest in maintaining the stability and prosperity that was once the envy of the world.

South Asian power balance shifts toward Pakistan

Muqtedar Khan

Professor of International Relations at the University of Delaware, a Senior Non-Resident Fellow at the Middle East Policy Council, and host of the YouTube channel, 'Khanversations', on global affairs

In recent weeks, an intense debate has emerged in India regarding Pakistan's rising diplomatic stature, following its role as mediator and venue for negotiations between the United States and Iran. Iranian and American officials – including U.S. President Donald Trump – have publicly acknowledged Pakistan's leadership, specifically Field Marshal Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, for their role in precipitating and sustaining the ceasefire, and maintaining channels of communication.

While Pakistan is now seen as central to diplomacy around the Iran war, India's response has been marked by silence – variously interpreted as caution toward Mr. Trump or as strategic restraint. India has not criticised Israel or the U.S. for their actions, and this contrast with Pakistan's rising role has fuelled debate within India's strategic community about the shifting balance between the two countries.

Gains from enhanced diplomatic visibility

Pakistan's diplomatic visibility has increased not only due to its mediation role but also because of its expanding engagement with Washington and its growing influence in Gulf security. Its relationship with the U.S. – particularly under Mr. Trump – has elevated Pakistan's profile. At the same time, its defence partnership with Saudi Arabia, and possibly a similar security partnership with Qatar, have further reinforced its strategic relevance in the region.

This enhanced diplomatic position has translated into economic and political gains. Saudi Arabia's pledge of billions of dollars highlights the financial dividends of Pakistan's rising influence. Since the end of Operation Sindoor, Pakistan has also secured several diplomatic wins denying India's efforts to portray it as a state sponsor of terrorism and diplomatically isolate it. India's efforts have been undermined by Pakistan's growing alignment with the U.S. as a counterterrorism partner against al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, as well as its role in Gaza-related discussions and the Iran crisis. Together, these developments suggest that Pakistan's recent diplomatic momentum has blunted India's strategy, raising broader questions about whether the regional balance of power in South Asia is beginning to shift.

> Pakistan's recent diplomatic momentum appears to have blunted India's strategy, raising broader questions about the regional balance of power in South Asia

Pyramid of power

According to scholars of international relations, states are often understood within a hierarchy of power based on their capacity to project influence and shape outcomes beyond their borders. At the apex are superpowers such as the U.S. and China – states with the ability to project power globally and to shape, the international order itself; their influence spans military, economic and institutional domains on a worldwide scale. The next tier consists of global powers, which, while not able to unilaterally shape the global order, possess sufficient capabilities to project power across multiple regions, as illustrated by Russia. Below them are middle powers, which lack comprehensive global reach and do not dominate multiple regions, yet exert meaningful influence through partnerships and economic and military capacity; countries such as Türkiye, South Korea, Indonesia and Brazil are often cited as examples. Next are regional powers, which dominate a specific geographic area but have limited ability to project influence beyond it, such as Saudi Arabia in the Gulf. Finally, there are minor powers, comprising most states whose influence remains largely confined within their own borders and whose role in shaping regional or global outcomes is limited.

The Lowy Institute operationalises comprehensive national power by combining hard and soft capabilities into a single analytical framework. It assigns roughly 55% weight to material power – economic size, military capability, and resources – and 45% to softer dimensions such as diplomacy, economic networks, and institutional influence.

Before Operation Sindoor, using the Lowy Institute metric, I would place India in the second tier from the top as a global power given both its hard power and soft power capabilities, while Pakistan would fall into the second tier from the bottom as a regional power. However, developments over the past few months suggest movement in opposite directions. India's performance during Operation Sindoor has not been widely seen as commensurate with its perceived stature or the expectations surrounding its rise, whereas Pakistan has been viewed by many as performing above its capacity. At the same time, India's continued silence or restraint– particularly in relation to Mr. Trump and major geopolitical developments – has contributed to its marginalisation from key global events. This perception has been reinforced by economic and geopolitical shifts, including a decline in India's ranking from the fourth to the sixth largest economy and the waning visibility of groupings that once elevated its profile, such as I2U2, BRICS, and the Quadrilateral Dialogue.

In contrast, Pakistan, without any change in material capabilities, has significantly enhanced its diplomatic profile and relevance. The result is a perceptible shift: India appears to be moving from a global power toward the characteristics of a middle power, while Pakistan is emerging as a more consequential regional power with aspirations toward middle-power status. This evolving dynamic – India trending downward and Pakistan upward in relative standing – may help explain the intensity of current debates within India's strategic community, as well as the more confident and optimistic mood within Pakistan's strategic discourse.

In context

My final observation for Indian policymakers is that whatever constraints India faces with regard to the U.S. and Israel – whether driven by ideological alignment or dependence on defence technology – the choices it is making will inevitably affect the softer dimensions of its power. While these softer elements can enhance or diminish a country's influence in global affairs, they are not a substitute for hard power: military capability, a robust economy, demographic scale, and cutting-edge technological capacity. In these foundational areas, there has been no significant relative change between India and Pakistan.

While India remains firm in the elements of hard power, Pakistan while gaining in soft power is still nursing a fragile economy. And that matters.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Recusal test

The hearing in the liquor case is an interesting instance of prejudice versus procedure (Editorial page, April 29). Although there is no law explicitly defining the recusal of a judge in a case, it lies within the judge's discretion to recuse themselves in the interest of visible fairness and the principles of natural justice, notably *nemo judex in causa sua* (Latin), which means that a judge should not adjudicate a case in which there is a reasonable apprehension of bias. In *Ranjit Thakur vs Union of India* (1987), the Supreme Court held that the issue is not whether a judge is actually biased, but whether a party has a reasonable apprehension of bias. A significant number of precedents support this principle.

Buddha Jagdish Rao,
Visakhapatnam

The Delhi High Court has passed the recusal test. If it fails, litigants may begin to use it as a precedent. If we examine the *mens rea* of former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, his intention did not appear to have been to ensure the judge's recusal. Rather, it seemed aimed at prolonging the trial or appeal. In criminal cases, when proceedings are delayed for a long time, their gravity tends to diminish. His apparent objective, therefore, was to increase the turnaround time and remain politically secure.

Ashok Kumar Sethi,
Hisar, Haryana

IPL scores

Even 200-plus scores are being chased successfully in the IPL. The IPL is becoming batters' playfield with the passage of each game.

K. Pradeep,
Chennai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

Why 'digital vigilantism' is not the problem

Prachi Dutta

Corporate lawyer licensed in New York and India, advises companies and funds, and serves as an Adjunct Professor at Jindal Global Law School and Shiv Nadar University

The Delhi High Court recently made some observations about "digital vigilantism", and that statements can sometimes "transcend mere free expression and act as a catalyst for public shaming". The context is a defamation suit brought before the Court by an individual who allegedly misbehaved with a lady on a domestic flight. The lady attempted to amplify his conduct by posting her ordeal on social media, which was shared by media houses and an actress, who apparently did not verify the allegations made in the post.

These observations and statements once again highlight the growing use of social media to amplify claims of harassment and misconduct due to a sense of collective helplessness and people's lack of faith in systems to swiftly and adequately address sexual harassment claims.

Whether it was the role social media played in the #MeToo movement in attempting to bring justice to victims of sexual harassment or videos recording instances of harassment posted on TikTok, the bottom line is that social media is being used to "crowd source" retributive action, wherein exposure offers accountability due to institutional inaction, as per Sara Witmer.

Systemic apathy

Justice systems globally, due to their long-drawn-out processes, deliver justice in a belated fashion. Coupled with the apathy and unwarranted intrusion of police authorities and victim blaming, the process of speaking up against sexual harassment is even more challenging. The redress process often becomes a form of punishment for all parties involved.

Due to the lack of processes, systems and institutions in delivering justice, social media is used by victims to bridge the gap between harassment and redress mechanisms. This leads to problems like allegations being amplified without any mechanism to verify them, false allegations circulating because of the anonymity offered by social media, lack of accountability, and the reputational loss of all parties involved. It creates a public spectacle rather than actually addressing the issue.

However, when processes and systems continue to fail victims, the need to strengthen these processes is of the utmost importance so that victims do not have to use social media as a redress vehicle to achieve justice. It is crucial to ensure a balance between helping victims while protecting the reputation of the alleged harassers, so that one does not trample on the other in the quest for justice. It is important to maintain the principles of natural justice and fair trial.

On 'vigilantism'

Another issue is with the terminology of "digital vigilantism". The word vigilantism in itself invokes a negative connotation. As per Les Johnston, "vigilantism", by its definition, involves the premeditation of participants who are private citizens; their engagement with the issue would be voluntary.

It is also a social movement, which uses or threatens the use of force and arises when an established order is under threat from the transgression of institutionalised norms and aims to control crime or other social infractions by offering assurances of security both to the participants and to others.

Social media posts in the face of harassment do not fall squarely within the purview of vigilantism as there is no established order that is under threat and there is also absolutely no assurance of security to participants. In fact, both the victims and the perpetrators can be recipients of doxxing.

Simply put, when there is a collective failure of processes, then one turns to social media to amplify harassment – this cannot be defined as "digital vigilantism".

> Social media is being used to 'crowd source' retributive action, wherein exposure offers accountability due to institutional inaction

Social media redressal

There have been several instances of unwarranted behaviour during air travel. Case in point is the incident that occurred in November 2022, when a man urinated on a woman. The airlines was slow to act upon the complaint and it was only once details were made public that the airlines took action against the individual. The fundamental issue, therefore, is to have adequate processes at all levels so that a timely redress can be carried out. For instance, if airlines had proper systems in the form of strict no-fly lists, one may not have to resort to social media amplification.

To draw a parallel between consumer services, when a consumer has an unpleasant experience, they have the right to take to social media to express their displeasure. The outcome is two-pronged – either the service provider will respond with their defence or apologise for the bad experience. This helps other consumers make informed choices before availing the same service. Moreover, in consumer services there are adequate systems and processes that exist before a person takes to social media to express displeasure. Customer grievance teams are often prompt to act on complaints because of the fear of reputational and financial loss. However, justice systems and processes that help to achieve real, legal justice are significantly different. They are not prompt and often refuse to act on complaints of harassment, leaving victims with no choice but to take to other channels to amplify their grievances.

The issue therefore, is not of freedom of expression versus public shaming but the fact that in the face of abject failure of processes, people are left with no choice but to use social media as a tool to achieve justice. To avoid "digital vigilantism", a collective strengthening of processes and faith in these processes is crucial.

Tamil Nadu's growth record

The manufacturing sector continues to be the principal driver of growth

STATE OF PLAY

K.R. Shanmugam

Tamil Nadu, which is the second-largest State economy, has sustained a high-growth trajectory, recording a real Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) growth of 10.83% in 2025-26, following 11.19% in 2024-25. This places the State well above the national average of 7.4% and marks two consecutive years of double-digit growth. This performance highlights the State's strong policy framework, and structural strengths, positioning it as a leading contributor to India's growth.

Over the medium term, Tamil Nadu's growth acceleration has been notable. It recorded an average real growth of 9.07% from 2021-22 to 2025-25, compared to 5.21% from 2016-17 to 2020-21, and 7.18% during the pre-COVID period. This suggests a strong post-pandemic recovery supported by targeted fiscal measures and industrial policy. Nominal GSDP expanded from ₹31.19 lakh crore in 2024-25 to ₹35.29 lakh crore in 2025-26, registering a 13.16% growth, which is the highest among States.

Sustained high growth has important fiscal and welfare implications: it enhances revenue buoyancy, expands fiscal space for social and infrastructure spending, and supports employment and income generation, thereby reinforcing inclusive development.

The secondary sector remains the principal driver of growth, expanding by 15.02% in 2025-26, significantly above the national average of 6.6%. Within this, construction and manufacturing recorded strong growth rates of 15.02% and 14.22% respectively, compared to around 7% nationally for both sectors. Tamil Nadu's industrial base continues to underspin its growth model. It contributes 13.35% to India's manufacturing GDP. With over 40,000 factories employing about 25 lakh workers, the State ranks first nationally in factory employment.

The services sector, accounting for 53.54% of the Gross Value Added (GVA), grew at 8.54% in 2025-26, slightly below the national average of 9.1%. However, several sub-sectors showed strong momentum, including transport, storage and communication at 13.35% and financial services at 11.11%, indicating broad-based expansion. The primary sector grew by 5.92%, outperforming the national average of 2.7%, driven by a 8.91% recovery in agriculture.

The drivers of growth

Tamil Nadu's per capita income (NSDP) has nearly doubled from ₹2.096 lakh in 2020-21 to ₹4.08 lakh in 2025-26, the second highest in the country, next only to Karnataka. In comparison, the all-India average stands at ₹2.196 lakh.

The State's growth is supported by both supply and demand-side factors. On the supply side, the State benefits from strong infrastructure, including reliable power, extensive road and port connectivity, and established industrial corridors. High human capital, reflected in technical education and skill development, supports productivity across sectors. The State is also a leading destination for Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), with inflows rising from $2,169 million in 2022-23 to $3,681 million in 2024-25.

On the demand side, a large consumer base, rising incomes, and rapid urbanisation sustain strong household consumption. Investment demand remains robust, driven by private sector activity in manufacturing, automobiles, electronics, and renewable energy, supported by a favourable business environment. Public expenditure on infrastructure, education, health, and social welfare further reinforces demand. Export performance also remains a key growth lever. According to NITI Aayog's Export Preparedness Index, Tamil Nadu ranks second with a score of 64.41, just behind Maharashtra. Importantly, rising demand has been matched by supply-side capacity, helping contain inflation. Retail inflation declined from 5.2% last year to 2.62% in December 2025.

Moreover, Tamil Nadu's fiscal policy has played a counter-cyclical and developmental role. While the pandemic necessitated expansionary measures, the State has since initiated fiscal consolidation. The fiscal deficit declined from 4.91% of GSDP in 2020-21 to 3% in 2026-27BE, while the revenue deficit reduced from 3.49% to 1.2%. The debt-GSDP remains around 26%. Overall, the State's strong growth momentum, rising FDIs, and robust export performance provide a solid foundation for achieving its ambition of becoming a $1 trillion economy.

K.R. Shanmugam is former Director, Madras School of Economics, and economic consultant to GoTN.

An SIR-marred turnout in West Bengal

In absolute terms, the increase in voter turnout in the eastern State was lowest among recent electoral cycles

DATA POINT

Devyanshi Bihani
Sambavi Parthasarathy
Pon Vasanth B.A.

West Bengal, where the Assembly polls concluded on Wednesday, recorded a voter turnout of close to 92%, the highest in the State's electoral history according to provisional figures released by the Election Commission (EC). However, as seen recently in Tamil Nadu, the record turnout was not driven by a sharp increase in voter participation, but by the low base effect of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls shrinking the size of the State's electorate.

The SIR exercise, which happened in a highly controversial manner in West Bengal, brought down the electorate by nearly 11% from 7.66 crore to 6.26 crore. **Table 1** shows the size and the growth of electors and voters who turned out since 2001. The last SIR happened after the 2001 Assembly polls, which resulted in the electorate declining in size by 1% during the 2006 election. Consequently, the 2006 polls saw a jump in voter turnout. The number of people who voted increased by 7.7%.

Similarly, the number of electors fell from 7.34 crore in the 2021 Assembly election to 6.82 crore in the latest polls, a decline of 7%. However, the number of people who voted increased only by 3.6%. This is the lowest increase in voter participation in at least the last 10 Assembly elections. This could indicate that many eligible voters who would have otherwise voted, could not do so because of the SIR deletions.

A constituency-wise analysis shows that 242 of the 294 constituencies saw an increase in the number of people who voted in the latest polls, compared to the 2021 Assembly election. **Map 2** shows that the constituencies which had an increase in the number of voters in the 2026 polls were concentrated more in the northern and south-western regions with constituencies such as Chanchal, Domkal, Sitalkuchi registering the highest increases in the range of around 29,000.

A cluster of constituencies across the southern delta and and parts of the north regions also exhibited declines. Seats such as Samserganj, Metiaburuz, and Howrah Uttar saw a decline of around 33,500, 24,000 and 19,000 voters respectively compared to 2021.

Table 3 shows that the constituencies that saw the highest deletions during the SIR were also the ones that saw the sharpest increase in voter turnout in percentage terms. For instance, seats like Chowrangee and Jorasanko saw about 40% elector deletions in the latest SIR exercise. These constituencies registered a turnout of about 86% in the latest poll. This is an increase of at least 33 percentage points compared to the 2021 Assembly election.

Seats which experienced the lowest deletions such as Katulpur, Bhagabanpur and Sabang registered voter turnout of more than 90% in the latest polls. However, this was only an increase of less than five percentage points when compared to the 2021 Assembly election. In other words, these constituencies were already turning out in large numbers before.

A regionwise analysis of voter turnout shows that the south-western region, which comprises nearly 117 of the State's 294 constituencies, saw an increase in the number of people who voted in almost all the constituencies **(Table 4)**. This was followed by the northern region, where 48 of the 54 constituencies saw an increase in voters compared to 2021. The Greater Kolkata region, comprising several urban areas, had a high proportion of seats where there was an absolute decrease in the total number of voters who turned out in comparison to 2021.

The denominator effect

The data for the charts were sourced from the Election Commission of India

TABLE 1: West Bengal's electorate and voter participation across Assembly elections

Election year	Total electors (in crore)	Change in electors (in %)	People who voted (in crore)	Change in voters (in %)	Voter Turnout (in %)
2001	4.86	6.7	3.66	-3.1	75.3
2006	4.81	-1.1	3.94	7.7	81.9
2011	5.62	16.9	4.74	20.2	84.3
2016	6.59	17.2	5.47	15.3	83.0
2021	7.34	11.3	6.04	10.4	82.3
2026	6.82	-7	6.26	3.64	91.8

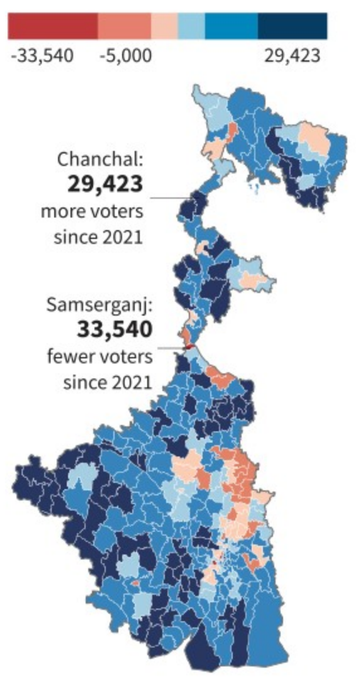
TABLE 3: Voter turnout in constituencies with high deletions during SIR

Assembly Constituency (AC)	Deletions (in %)	Voter turnout in 2021(in %)	Voter turnout in 2026 (in %)	Difference (in %)
Chowrangee	40	53.55	86.5	33
Jorasanko	38	49.99	86.5	36.5
Samserganj	36	80.05	96.0	16.0
HowrahUttar	33	68.51	88.1	19.6
KolkataPort	30	64.61	89.4	24.8
Katulpur	1	90.82	93.3	2.5
Bhagabanpur	2	87.59	92.2	4.6
Sabang	2	89.21	92.6	3.4
Patashpur	2	88.33	92.2	3.9
Mahishadal	2	89.44	89.3	-0.2

TABLE 4: Regional breakdown of constituencies based on whether they saw an increase or decrease in the number of voters between 2021 and 2026

Region	Total number of constituencies	ACs where more people voted in 2026	ACs where fewer people voted in 2026
Greater Kolkata	42	28	14
North	54	48	6
South east	81	55	26
South West	117	111	6

MAP 2 : The constituency-level change in the number of people who voted between 2021 and 2026



The constituencies that saw an increase in the number of people who voted in 2026, compared to 2021, were concentated more in the western and south-western regions. Constituencies such as Chanchal, Domkal, and Sitalkuchi registered the highest increases

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 30, 1976

Navigational survey of entire Indian coast by 1982

Madras, April 29: The Navy's survey ships, Darshak Jamuna and Sutlej, hoped to complete survey of the entire Indian coast by 1982 to ensure the safety of navigation by home and international shipping in Indian waters, the commanding officer of INS Darshak Commander M.K. Tikku told newsmen here to-day.

Till 1967 only 9,000 square miles of the 148.060 square miles requiring to be surveyed had been made but the pace picked up after the ships equipped themselves with modern electronic gadgets, he said.

INS Darshak the largest and the first modern survey ship of the Navy has come to Madras port after completing surveys in Nicobar and Andaman Islands. The Navy's hydrographic service has been recognised as one of the finest and best east of the Suez according to Commander Tikku. The three survey ships earn Rs. 5 lakhs in foreign exchange per annum by the sale of their charts to foreign lines. The Indian earnings of each come to around Rs. 90 lakhs a year. A major task of the survey ships is to prepare navigational charts of all major and minor ports and make them available internationally so that ships calling at these ports can avoid underwater hazards like rocks.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 30, 1926

Development of Indian Railways

London, April 29: The Commons agreed to the motion of Mr. Waddington urging utilisation of every opportunity to develop Empire Trade. Replying to the references to India in the course of the debate, Sir. P. Cunliffe-Lister said that the development of Indian Railways must rest with the Government of India and it was unwise and improper to try to force, in the interests of this country, development which India cannot meet or which she does not require. But an impartial observer reading the Aevorth Report and speaking with those acquainted with Indian Railway administration, traveling facilities and Indian desire to travel, would agree that it was in the interest of India herself rapidly to increase her railway development. He pointed out that legislation had been passed giving a three-quarter grant of interest.

From Page One

92% polling in phase two of Bengal polls

The Falta Assembly seat in South 24 Parganas, which has been on the boil over the past few days over a war of words between police observer Ajay Pal Sharma and Trinamool candidate Jahangir Khan, witnessed a bizarre incident where the button to vote for the BJP on the EVM machine was covered by tape at some polling booths. These allegations were made by BJP candidate Debangshu Panda. At booth number 186 at Belsingha village in the Falta seat, the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) baton-charged several women who cried foul over the role of Central forces.

The Trinamool Congress raised several allegations of excesses committed by the CAPF, including at booth number 116 in the Satgachia Assembly seat where a child was injured in action by CAPF personnel, and at the Ausgram Assembly seat in Purba Bardhaman where a voter was severely beaten up. The Trinamool also alleged that an 81-year-old man died at Udaynarayanpur in Howrah after assault by CAPF personnel. The CAPF also attacked and destroyed temporary structures of the Trinamool, BJP, and the All India Forward Bloc at Chuchura in Hooghly, as they had been set up within the restricted areas around polling booths.

"The atrocities by the Central forces are unprecedented. What is happening is not at all free and fair polls," Ms. Banerjee said.

'Better health-seeking behaviour seen in India'

"This shows that high expenditure is not widespread but limited to specific cases requiring specialised treatment. Moreover, the OOPE in more than half of the entire hospitalisation cases in the public health facilities incur only ₹1,100. Importantly, for non-hospitalisation (outpatient) care, the median OOPE in public health facilities is zero, reflecting that a large proportion of citizens are able to access essential healthcare services entirely free of cost,'' the survey said.

India has also registered a decline in infectious diseases and a rising prevalence of non-communicable diseases, including diabetes and cardiovascular conditions.

In response to rising demand, the utilisation of public healthcare facilities has strengthened, particularly for outpatient care in rural areas, where utilisation increased from 33% to 35%, the survey said.

This improvement has been attributed to the expansion of comprehensive primary healthcare services, with an emphasis on preventive, promotive, and early diagnostic care, supported by the availability of free drugs and diagnostics, the NSO said.

Hate speech stems from 'us vs. them' mindset: SC

"Hate speech is not merely a deviation from acceptable discourse; it is fundamentally antithetical to the constitutional value of fraternity and strikes at the moral fabric of our Republic. It also runs counter to the deeper civilisational ethos of India....," the top court said.

"The constitutional role of the judiciary is primarily to interpret and apply the law, and not to legislate... Any attempt by courts to prescribe detailed statutory schemes or to frame provisions akin to legislation would amount to judicial law-making and would impermissibly trench upon the functions assigned to the legislature," Justice Nath reasoned.

The court said hate crimes continue to result in bloodshed because of poor enforcement of existing laws, and not because of a dearth of laws to address the issue and to punish the perpetrators.

"It cannot be contended that the law is either silent or deficient in addressing grievances arising from conduct that disturbs public order or fosters inter-group hostility. Any deficiency lies not in the absence of law, but in its application and enforcement in specific cases...," the court said.

657 trafficked artefacts returned to India: U.S.

The Avalokiteshvara sculpture was part of a large hoard of bronzes discovered near the Lakshmana Temple in 1939 and had entered the collection of the Mahant Ghasidas Memorial Museum, Raipur, by 1952. It was later stolen from the museum and smuggled into the U.S. by 1982, eventually ending up in a private collection in New York by 2014. The $2 million bronze figure was located and seized from that collection in 2025.

Another artefact includes a sandstone figure of a dancing Ganesha, which was looted by one of Kapoor's indicted co-conspirators, Ranjeet "Shantoo" Kanwar, from a temple in Madhya Pradesh in 2000. Convicted trafficker Vaman Ghiya later sold and shipped the Ganesha to New York-based gallery owner Doris Wiener. In 2012, following her mother's death, Nancy Wiener – later convicted for antiquities trafficking – knowingly created false provenance for the sculpture and sold it through Christie's New York. The Ganesha was purchased by a private collector at the 2012 auction, who surrendered it to the District Attorney earlier this year.

India and China discuss LAC stability, regional security

The two sides exchange views on regional security and the situation in West Asia; Defence Minister also holds talks with his counterparts from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met his Chinese counterpart, Dong Jun, on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' Meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic on Tuesday.

Strategic dialogue: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh interacts with his Chinese counterpart Admiral Dong Jun, during the SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting in Bishkek on Tuesday. ANI

Peace along LAC

The two sides discussed maintaining peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and exchanged views on broader regional security issues, including the West Asia situation, the spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in India posted on social media platform X.

On Tuesday, while addressing the SCO gathering, Mr. Singh described terrorism as the most serious threat to global peace and the emerging world order. Emphasising a policy of zero tolerance, the Minister called for a unified and consistent approach among member states to eliminate terrorism, extremism and radicalism in all forms.

Expanding defence ties

On the sidelines of the meeting, Mr. Singh held discussions with his counterparts from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic, focusing on strengthening defence cooperation and expanding strategic ties with partner countries.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, established in 2001 in Shanghai, is one of the largest regional organisations promoting political, economic and security cooperation. Its member states include India, Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, and Belarus.

India became a full member of the grouping in 2017, and assumed its rotating presidency in 2022-23, underlining its growing role in regional security and multilateral cooperation.

Rajnath gave 'clean chit' to Pakistan in SCO speech: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Jairam Ramesh linked the comments to what he called PM Modi's policy of appeasing the U.S.

The Congress on Wednesday accused Defence Minister Rajnath Singh of giving a "shameful clean chit" to Pakistan while speaking at a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting in Bishkek, and said his statements were "anti-national".

Congress general secretary communications in-charge Jairam Ramesh, in a post on *X*, linked Mr. Singh's comments to what he claimed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policy of "appeasement" of the U.S. and "calibrated capitulation" to China.

Mr. Ramesh shared a video clip of the Defence Minister speaking in Bishkek in which he said that one must not forget "that terrorism has no nationality and no theology". "No grievance, real or supposed, can become an excuse for terrorism and humanitarian loss," Mr. Singh said.

"Yesterday, the Defence Minister, obviously with the approval of and at the instance of the Prime Minister, gave a shameful clean chit to Pakistan while speaking in Bishkek. Is Pakistan not the epicentre of terrorism? Aren't there terrorist camps in Pakistan that target India? Isn't anti-India sentiment promoted in Pakistan," Mr. Ramesh asked.

Reacting to the speech, Mr. Ramesh said the conspiracy and execution of the Mumbai and Pahalgam terror attacks were carried out by terrorists linked to Pakistan.

"Clearly, this new stance in relation to Pakistan is all part of the PM's policy of appeasement of the U.S. and calibrated capitulation to China," Mr. Ramesh said. "The Defence Minister's shocking statements are as anti-national as the PM's bizarre clean chit to China on June 19, 2020".

Bombay HC grants bail to convict in rationalist Dabholkar murder case

Chinmay Gaikwad
NEW DELHI

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday ordered the release of Sharad Kalaskar, a convict in the 2013 murder of rationalist Narendra Dabholkar, while noting doubts over his identification as the assailant. A Division Bench of Justice Ajay Gadkari and Justice Ranjitsinha Bhonsale directed him to furnish a bail bond of ₹50,000.

CBI officials taking Sharad Kalaskar to their office in Navi Mumbai in 2018. FILE PHOTO

The Bench was hearing an interim application filed by Mr. Kalaskar, who had appealed against his conviction by a special court in 2024. He sought bail until the appeal is disposed of.

The court refused a request by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to stay the bail order for four weeks.

"Since we have already raised doubts over the identity of the applicant Kalaskar as the assailant, there is no question of staying this order," Justice Gadkari said. A detailed copy of the order is yet to be made available.

Dabholkar, founder of the Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti, was shot dead by two men on a motorcycle while on a morning walk in Pune on August 20, 2013. The CBI took over the investigation in 2014 following a Bombay High Court order and named Sachin Andure and Mr. Kalaskar as the perpetrators.

The trial began in 2021, though the sessions case was instituted in 2016. On May 10, 2024, a special court convicted Mr. Andure and Mr. Kalaskar under Sections 302 (murder) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code. The court acquitted three other accused – Virendra Tawade, Vikram Bhave, and Sanjeev Punalekar – of charges of murder, criminal conspiracy, and common intention. None of the five were convicted under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act or the Arms Act.

Following the verdict, Dabholkar's daughter Mukta filed an appeal in the High Court challenging the acquittal of the three accused. Mr. Kalaskar and Mr. Andure also filed cross-appeals challenging their convictions.

Mr. Kalaskar continues to be in jail in the Dabholkar case. In a separate development, he, along with Mr. Tawade and Amol Kale, was granted bail by the Kolhapur Bench of the High Court in October 2025 in the murder case of Comrade Govind Pansare.

HC rejects plea of man acquitted in 26/11 terror case

Chinmay Gaikwad
NEW DELHI

He sought a police clearance certificate that is required to commercially drive an autorickshaw

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday dismissed a petition filed by Fahim Ansari, acquitted in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack case, seeking a police clearance certificate (PCC) required to commercially drive an autorickshaw.

A Division Bench of Justices Ajay Gadkari and Ranjitsinha Bhonsale said the authorities had refused the certificate on security grounds and that the refusal was justified. The petition was filed in February 2024.

"Considering the facts of the case and also the security reasons highlighted by the authorities, we are of the opinion that the authorities have rightly refused the PCC to the petitioner. In view thereof, the petition is dismissed," the court said.

Mr. Ansari had sought the court's intervention to protect what he called his right to livelihood. He argued that the PCC was required to obtain a Police Service Vehicle badge necessary for driving an autorickshaw commercially.

The Maharashtra Government, represented by Public Prosecutor Mankunwar Deshmukh, told the court in November 2025 that Mr. Ansari was free to take up any employment that does not require a PCC.

Mr. Ansari is the only accused in the 26/11 case to have been acquitted by the trial court. He was accused of preparing maps of Mumbai and handing them to persons in Pakistan for terror attacks.

A special court acquitted him on May 6, 2010. However, he was convicted in a separate case registered in Lucknow and received a 10-year prison term.

India and Italy to hold talks on boosting defence ties

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will hold bilateral talks with his Italian counterpart, Guido Crosetto, in New Delhi on Thursday, aimed at strengthening defence ties between India and Italy.

According to the Ministry of Defence, the two leaders are expected to deliberate on issues related to defence cooperation, and regional and global security developments.

India-Italy defence relations have gained momentum following Mr. Singh's visit to Rome in October 2023. Mr. Crosetto's maiden visit to India is being seen as a reflection of the growing intent on both sides to expand existing engagements and explore new avenues, particularly in defence industrial collaboration, it added.

The talks also come against the backdrop of the India-European Union Defence and Strategic Partnership signed in January 2026.

Pune police ask three U.S. nationals to leave India

Press Trust of India
PUNE

The police in Maharashtra's Pune city have issued a 'Leave India' notice to three American nationals after they were allegedly found engaging in religious propagation and violating tourist visa norms, officials said on Wednesday.

The trio, all men, was recently found distributing pamphlets of religious nature in the Sadashiv Peth area of the city, they said.

While one of them is a senior citizen, two others are in the age group of 45 to 50, an official said. "Alert citizens spotted them and informed the police," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Branch) Sandip Bhajibhakare said.

India and Sri Lanka reaffirm maritime ties through bilateral diving exercise in Colombo

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

India and Sri Lanka reaffirmed their growing maritime partnership by conducting the fourth edition of the bilateral diving exercise, IN-SLN DIVEX 2026, in Colombo from April 21 to 28.

The Indian Navy said that it deployed its diving support and submarine rescue vessel *INS Nireekshak*, while the Sri Lankan Navy fielded its diving teams, jointly enhancing operational coordination and professional synergy.

Focused on complex underwater operations, the exercise was aimed at strengthening interoperability through advanced deep-sea diving evolutions, including mixed gas diving drills. Divers from both Navies carried out extensive harbour and open-sea dives, demonstrating high levels of operational expertise.

Indian Navy personnel during the bilateral India-Sri Lanka diving exercise, with *INS Nireekshak* in the background, in Colombo. PTI

A key highlight of the exercise was the conduct of mixed gas dives off Colombo over the World War-era wrecks *SS Worcester* and *SS Perseus*.

Marking a significant milestone, the divers successfully executed deep-sea dives beyond 55 metres, boosting joint capabilities in underwater search, rescue and salvage operations in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), it added.

During the exercise, Rear Admiral S.J. Kumara, Flag Officer Commanding, Western Naval Area of the Sri Lanka Navy, visited *INS Nireekshak* and commended the Indian Navy's continued support in enhancing the training of Sri Lankan divers. He emphasised the importance of sustained exchange of best practices and professional expertise.

In a solemn gesture, the Commanding Officer of *INS Nireekshak* paid homage at the Indian Peace Keeping Force Memorial in Colombo, laying a wreath in honour of Indian soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during the IPKF operations in Sri Lanka.

Further, extending humanitarian cooperation, two BHISM (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog, Hita and Maitri) cubes (portable hospital units) were handed over under India's Aarogya Maitri initiative, enhancing disaster response and medical preparedness.

The exercise concluded with a ceremonial send-off for *INS Nireekshak*, symbolising the strong camaraderie and enduring maritime partnership between the two Navies.

IN-SLN DIVEX 2026 stands as a testament to sustained bilateral collaboration, aligned with the MAHASAGAR vision (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions), and a shared commitment to peace, stability and security in the IOR.

Helping hand: Voters being assisted by security personnel at a polling booth in Kolkata on Wednesday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Ground zero: BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari visiting a polling booth. Trinamool workers protested against him during the visit. PTI

Duty done: People showing their inked finger after casting their vote during the West Bengal elections. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Crucial polls: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee after casting her voting in Kolkata. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

From turnout to transfers, Bengal elections marked by many firsts

Curtains down on second and final phase of polling; special intensive revision of electoral rolls and deletion of voters, security deployment, adjudication hearings, election-related transfers intensified focus on the State; result on May 4

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

Lining up: People standing in a a queue to cast their vote on Wednesday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

The West Bengal Assembly election, the second and final phase of which concluded on Wednesday, has been possibly the most-watched State polls in recent history.

While the focus now shifts to May 4, when the results will be declared, the elections have been marked by many firsts.

The first phase saw a turnout of 93.19%, while the second recorded 92.6% – the highest in the State since Independence.

Apart from voter enthusiasm, the special intensive revision of electoral rolls had a two-pronged effect on turnout figures. The removal of names of dead and shifted voters and duplicate entries shrank the voter list by 13%. At the same time, concerns over citizenship-linked voting rights prompted many, especially migrant workers, to return home to vote.

More than 2.3 lakh Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) personnel, 38,297 State police personnel, 142 general observers, 95 police observers, 100 expenditure observers, and several teams of the National Investigative Agency have been deployed in the State.

Under the SIR process, voters flagged under the "logical discrepancy" category were checked against a highly contentious five-point list even if they were mapped to the 2002 SIR list.

After the EC hearings, nearly 60 lakh of approximately 1.5 crore cases remained disputed due to disagreement between the Electoral Registration Officers and micro-observers appointed by the poll panel. This led to over 60 lakh names being placed under "adjudication" category and excluded from voting pending verification.

The Supreme Court in March took an "extraordinary" decision to involve the judiciary in the SIR process saying a persistent "trust deficit" between the Mamata Banerjee government and the EC had led to a "stalemate", with time running out.

The court-appointed judicial officers reviewed the disputed cases and struck down 27 lakh of them. The tribunals had, till Tuesday night, cleared 1,607 people of the 27 lakh. The remaining cases hang in limbo.

This poll season, West Bengal saw the highest number of election-related transfers, with 483 officials shifted during the poll period against just 23 transfers across all other poll-bound States put together.

According to the EC, seizures of illicit inducements crossed ₹510 crore.

70,000 CAPF personnel will remain in Bengal until further orders: poll body

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Offering aid: An elderly woman being assisted by a CAPF member at a polling booth in Hooghly on Wednesday. ANI

As many as 700 companies or 70,000 personnel of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) will remain deployed in West Bengal till "further orders", an official of the Election Commission said.

The deployment plan was finalised and issued on March 19, and the 70,000 personnel will continue to remain in the State for security arrangements and law and order duties, the official said.

In an X post, the Director-General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), G.P Singh, said that, as stated earlier, "500 companies of CAPF would stay in Bengal, after the polling, till further orders". He was referring to his previous post on April 25, in which he said: "It has also been conveyed to all Force Commanders that 500 Companies of CAPF would remain stationed in Bengal after the election process, till further orders."

Mr. Singh had shared an extract of the order which said that 200 companies of the CRPF; 150 of the Border Security Force (BSF); and 50 each of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) would remain deployed in the State.

According to an internal communication of the CRPF, the nodal force for all CAPFs for election-related deployment, 230 companies of the CRPF or 23,000 personnel would be de-inducted from Thursday. The CRPF companies would return to Jammu and Kashmir, their original place of deployment, the order said. Another 388 companies of the State Armed Police, comprising about 38,000 personnel, would be sent back to other States.

In all, immediately after the second phase of polling, around 61,000 out of 2.4 lakh personnel are being moved out of the State.

Raghav loses followers on Instagram after AAP exit

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chadha, who broke away from the AAP and joined the BJP, began losing followers on Instagram within a day of his exit. Mr. Chadha, popular on social media, lost 1.1 million followers by April 25, a day after his exit. He lost another one million by Wednesday.

While he had 14.6 million followers on the day he announced his departure, his count stood at 12.1 million on Wednesday.

AAP spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar said: "Now it's just the social media downfall of Mr. Chadha. The people will teach all the seven traitors a lesson they will not forget".

Modi inaugurates 594-km Ganga Expressway in Uttar Pradesh, praises overall development

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Grand opening: Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the inauguration of the Ganga Expressway in Hardoi on Wednesday. ANI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday inaugurated the 594-km Ganga Expressway in Hardoi, describing it as the identity of a "new Uttar Pradesh", which would emerge as a new lifeline for the State's connectivity and employment.

Hailing the development of the State, Mr. Modi added, "In Uttar Pradesh today, not only are expressways being built, but the overall development is also progressing at an even faster pace."

"The Ganga Expressway is not merely a road project, but the foundation of Uttar Pradesh's economic, social, and industrial transformation in which development is moving ahead even faster than the speed of the expressway itself. People can now reach the Sangam in a few hours and visit Kashi for darshan," he said.

Inaugurating the project built at an approximate cost of ₹36,230 crore, he said the six-lane access-controlled expressway was likely to significantly reduce travel time, making the journey from Meerut to Prayagraj possible in about six hours. The expressway would begin from Meerut and pass through Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Badaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Bareli, and Pratapgarh before culminating in Prayagraj.

"Previously, farmers' produce could not reach markets promptly, but now, with the expressway, products will arrive at markets more quickly, thereby increasing farmers' income," Mr. Modi said.

Uttar Pradesh was experiencing significant infrastructure development with remarkable advancements in expressways, airports, industrial corridors, and defence manufacturing.

Swift progress

"Initiatives like the BrahMos missile project are providing a new identity to the State's industrial capabilities. Uttar Pradesh is swiftly progressing towards becoming a one-trillion-dollar economy. With fresh opportunities in investment, industry, and employment, the State's reputation has evolved, making it a key destination for investors," the Prime Minister said.

He slammed the Opposition parties, primarily the Congress and the Samajwadi Party, for being "anti-women" and opposing the women's reservation amendment Bill.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the expressway would serve as a major medium for the progress of farmers, employment for youth, preservation of faith and culture, and the prosperity of Uttar Pradesh.

Earlier, the Prime Minister held a roadshow in Varanasi drawing large crowds along the route.

Jaishankar speaks with Araghchi days after BRICS logjam

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

S. Jaishankar

Days after an India-led meeting among BRICS envoys failed to reach a consensus on the conflict in West Asia, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his Iranian counterpart, Seyed Abbas Araghchi, spoke over phone on Wednesday.

Following the conversation that is part of the preparatory steps ahead of BRICS ministerial meeting that will be held here next month, the Iranian embassy here said that the two Ministers discussed the current Iran-U.S. ceasefire as well as "bilateral, regional and international issues".

"Had a detailed conversation about various aspects of the current situation. We agreed to remain in close touch," said Mr. Jaishankar after receiving the call from Mr. Araghchi. The Iranian Minister had visited Pakistan, Oman and Russia in the past five days to find a "workable framework" to resolve the conflict that erupted on February 28.

The Embassy of Iran said the two Ministers "discussed and exchanged views on the latest developments related to the ceasefire, bilateral relations, as well as regional and international issues".

The conversation indicates continuity in high-level contacts despite the fact that a meeting of Deputy Foreign Ministers and Special Envoys from BRICS and MENA (Middle East North Africa) held here last week failed to reach a consensus on the crisis as member countries had differing positions on matters such as Israel's involvement in the conflict.

The Hindu had reported that the envoys could not reach a consensus because of differences between Iran and the UAE, as well as India's desire to dilute the language about the Israel-Palestine conflict. The BRICS dialogue is part of the preparatory exchanges that are taking place ahead of the Ministerial meeting that will take place here next month.

Russia has indicated that Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will attend the BRICS Ministerial meeting in New Delhi. "On the 14th and 15th of May, the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov will participate in a full-fledged session or council, of the foreign ministries of BRICS countries in New Delhi. This session under the Indian presidency will become a good opportunity for detailed and profound discussion of relevant issues of international agenda," said Maria Zacharova, spokesperson of the Russian Foreign Ministry on Wednesday.

Mr. Araghchi's participation is yet to be confirmed.

Nicobar project is destruction dressed as development: Rahul

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Listening to concerns: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi interacting with people in Campbell Bay on Tuesday. ANI

The Great Nicobar Island project is "one of the biggest scams... the largest theft of Indian property" that is being undertaken to fulfil the "fantasies of one businessman" despite the damage it will do to India's ecology, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said on Wednesday.

Mr. Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, who was on the island on Tuesday, said in a video statement, "What is happening here is that all these trees are going to be cut with total disregard for people who live here, with total disregard for the damage this will do to India's ecology. So that one businessman, Mr. Adani, can fulfil his fantasies."

He said that "millions of trees marked for the axe" in the "160 sq. km of rainforest" are "condemned to die" as part of the ₹92,000-crore project to build an international transhipment port, an airport, and a tourism-centric township.

'Biggest scam'

"This is not development. This is destruction dressed in development's language," he said, adding that the project is "one of the biggest scams and gravest crimes against this country's natural and tribal heritage in our lifetime". "It must be stopped. And it can be stopped - if Indians choose to see what I have seen," he said.

Mr. Gandhi spent a day in Great Nicobar, meeting local Nicobarese tribal communities, settlers and ex-servicemen families. His visit came amid protests by the Nicobarese communities against clearances granted to the project. They have alleged that their forest rights had not been settled and have expressed apprehensions about losing access to their ancestral villages, and the forests.

'In a hidden manner'

"Every single person who lives here is against this project, none of them has been asked about it, and they do not know about the compensation they are supposed to receive. This is being done in a hidden manner, surreptitiously. Now, I know why the government did not want me to come here," he said.

While the National Green Tribunal, earlier this year, cleared the project, noting that the Union government had considered all possible damage to the ecology and had taken efforts to compensate for it, a challenge to the clearance is pending in the Calcutta High Court.

The court is hearing allegations that consent procedures for the project had been violated and that forest rights had not been settled. It is expected to hear the matter next in May.

The Congress leader's visit came weeks after a delegation of leaders from the Tribal Council of Little and Great Nicobar met with him in New Delhi to raise concerns about the project.

INBRIEF

12 labourers killed as van overturns in Madhya Pradesh

Twelve labourers were killed and more than 20 injured in an accident in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday night, the police said. The van they were travelling in overturned and collided with a car on the Indore- Ahmedabad National Highway. Manoj Kumar Singh, DIG, Indore (Rural), told *The Hindu* that the deceased included six women and two children. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief and announced compensation of ₹2 lakh each for the families of the deceased and ₹50,000 each to those injured. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said that ₹4 lakh each would be given to the kin of the deceased, ₹1 lakh each to the seriously injured, and ₹50,000 each to the injured.

6 killed, 8 injured as private bus rams van in Gujarat

Six persons were killed and eight injured after a private bus rammed a van carrying a group of women travelling together for a social function in Gujarat's Sabarkantha district on Wednesday, police said. The accident occurred on the National Highway 48, connecting Shamlaji and Himmatnagar, when the speeding bus rammed the van from behind. The victims were part of a catering team and were on their way from Modasa in neighbouring Aravalli district to Hunj village near Himmatnagar, according to the police. Six women travelling in the van died in the crash, officials confirmed.

Judiciary chapter in NCERT textbook was reviewed 'at highest level', SC told

In affidavit in Supreme Court, educationist Suparna Diwakar says she had 'no authorial, evaluative or decision-making role' in the drafting of the chapter in now-banned textbook; the chapter was not finalised without 'senior oversight', she adds

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

The controversial chapter on judiciary that appeared in the now-banned Class 8 social science textbook released by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) earlier this year, was reviewed within the NCERT and scrutinised at the highest levels, including by NCERT Director D.P. Saklani, an affidavit filed by educationist Suparna Diwakar has said.

Ms. Diwakar was one of three experts barred by the Supreme Court from all state appointments over drafting of the chapter on corruption in the judiciary.

"The textbook released by NCERT was subjected to review by the Department of Education in Social Sciences (DESS) within NCERT. The comments arising from such reviews were considered under the supervision of Prof. (Dr.) D.P. Saklani, Director, NCERT, who, in his capacity as Member-Convener of NOC [National Curriculum Frameworks Oversight Committee], bore institutional responsibility for ensuring that the Textbook conformed to the National Curriculum Framework 2023 prior to publication," the affidavit, accessed by *The Hindu*, said.

The NCERT prepares and publishes textbooks as per the syllabus based on the National Curriculum Framework. FILE PHOTO

"The Chapter thus reached and was scrutinised at the highest institutional level within NCERT. It was not finalised in the absence of senior oversight."

'Multi-tiered process'

The NCERT Director, in his affidavit, had said that the textbook in question was not placed before the National Syllabus and Teaching Learning Material Committee (NSTC), and the members of the Textbook Development Team (TDT) had circulated the same only among a few members digitally.

However, Ms. Diwakar's affidavit argued that at various stages of the process, the chapter was shared digitally by TDT Chairperson Michel Danino, with the Curricular Area Group, or CAG (Social Science), and some members of the NOC and NSTC, including Professor Saklani.

Professor Saklani, in his affidavit, had stated that Professor Danino, Alok Prasanna Kumar, co-founder of the Vidhi Centre of Legal Policy, who was roped in as a contributing expert for the chapter, and Ms. Diwakar were responsible for drafting the chapter. The court, in its order of March 11, 2026, asked all governments, public universities and institutions receiving funds from Central or State governments to "disassociate" from Mr. Kumar, Mr. Danino and Ms. Diwakar.

Ms. Diwakar, in the affidavit, sought a modification of the aforementioned order and pleaded with the court to permit her to continue her professional engagements. She has said that the preparation of the textbook was not attributable to any single individual but was the result of a multi-tiered institutional process, with distinct levels of oversight. "Final authority over content, approval and publication was vested not in any individual... but in NSTC, the NOC and NCERT," the affidavit mentioned. It stated that the NSTC comprises 19 members of the highest distinction and the NOC comprises 13 members.

"The NOC was, in terms of its own mandate, charged with verifying that what the NSTC produced actually conformed to the NCF-SE [National Curriculum Framework for School Education] 2023. Both bodies (NSTC and NOC) were kept informed of the content of the Chapter at multiple stages," the affidavit said.

'Limited role'

Ms. Diwakar's role was confined to "liaising and facilitation within the institutional process," the affidavit said. She further alleged that Professor Saklani filed an "incomplete" affidavit naming her as a member of the TDT "responsible for the chapter", without contacting her, or seeking to know her role. He also did not disclose to the Supreme Court that nature of her engagement with the NCERT was "contractual".

"Had the actual role and designation of the Applicant been accurately placed before SC, it would have been apparent that her involvement was wholly facilitative and that no authorial or evaluative responsibility could be attributed to her," she stated.

Ms. Diwakar has stated that she is a "contractual Programme Office consultant", with "no authorial, evaluative or decision-making role".

NMC does away with ceiling on MBBS intake

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Medical Commission (NMC), in its latest notification, has deleted two important provisions related to intake of MBBS students in medical colleges across India. The clause in the Undergraduate Medical Education Regulations, 2023 that "colleges seeking increased number of seats cannot exceed a total of 150 MBBS students from the year 2024-25" shall be deleted.

The notification also removed the limit of 100 MBBS seats per 10 lakh population in a State or a Union Territory.

Changes have also been made in the maximum distance allowed between a medical college and the attached hospital.

"The maximum distance between the plots of college and hospital shall be 10 km and in the case of North Eastern Region States and Himalayan States, maximum distance between the plots of college and hospital shall be 15 km," the notification said. The earlier stipulation was a travel time of a maximum 30 minutes.

The new regulations are expected to bring in more flexibility in establishing colleges.

NHRC is exceeding its jurisdiction: Allahabad HC

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

In a sharply worded observation, a judge of the Allahabad High Court said the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was overlooking serious cases of violence against Muslims while engaging in matters "that *prima facie* do not concern" its mandate.

The court was hearing a petition, filed by the Teachers Association Madaris Arabia, challenging a February 2025 NHRC directive to the Economic Offences Wing to investigate allegations against 558 aided madrasas in Uttar Pradesh. Justice Atul Sreedharan, part of a Division Bench including Justice Vivek Saran, said he was "astounded" by the Commission's order and questioned its jurisdiction.

Webinar to explore opportunities in the pharma industry

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Future Career Conversations series, organised by SRM Institute of Science & Technology and *The Hindu*, will host the sixth webinar in this series, 'Pharma 2030: Innovation, Regulation and the Rise of India' on May 3 at 11.30 a.m.

With advancements in drug discovery, growing focus on research and development, integration of digital health, and shifting regulatory frameworks, the webinar will unpack what these changes mean for the industry. It will provide insights into emerging career paths in the sector.

The panel will feature V. Chitra, Dean, Professor & Head, Department of Pharmacology, SRM College of Pharmacy; S. Vincent, Member Secretary, Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology, Government of Tamil Nadu; N. Damodaran, Vice-Principal, Professor & Head, Department of Pharmaceutics, SRM College of Pharmacy; and Vasan Sambandamurthy, Senior Vice-President (Strategic & Global Operations) at Bugworks Research Inc.

The session will be moderated by Athira Elssa Johnson, Senior Reporter, *The Hindu*. To register, visit newsth.live/THSRMDE or scan the QR code.

EPFO to launch portal to track inoperative accounts

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is set to launch E-PRAAPTI, a dedicated digital platform to facilitate identification, tracking, unique account number (UAN) linking, and activation of old EPF accounts.

A senior Labour Ministry official said E-PRAAPTI, or EPF Aadhaar-Based Access Portal for Tracking Inoperative Accounts, will provide a streamlined Aadhaar-based authentication mechanism that will enable members to securely access their old EPF account which may not have an UAN linked with it and initiate the process for updating their member profile, followed by seamless UAN linking and activation.

"In the initial phase, the portal will be member ID-based, ensuring a secure and efficient roll-out while delivering immediate benefits to a large segment of members who possess their member IDs," the official said.

Official says the portal will deliver immediate benefits to those who possess their member IDs

Going forward, E-PRAAPTI's scope will be expanded to include members who may not be able to recall or access their old member IDs. "The platform is expected to reduce manual intervention, minimise documentation, and enhance transparency and efficiency," he said.

Claims settled

The official said the EPFO had settled a record 8.31 crore claims in 2025-26, compared with 6.01 crore in 2024-25. "5.51 crore claims were for advance or partial withdrawals, indicating the ease of access to PF accounts, enabling members to draw upon their savings to meet their needs. 71.11% of advance claims were processed in auto mode (processed in three days), up from 59.19% in the previous year, minimising manual intervention. 6.68 crore members were able to file their claims without the hassle of uploading cheque leaf image," he said.

The Hindu's SIR data story wins gold at WAN-IFRA awards

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

At WAN-IFRA's Digital Media South Asia Awards, 2026, *The Hindu* bagged the "Gold" in the category of "best AI-driven news product, format or strategy", for its data story on the unusual deletion patterns in the Bihar Special Intensive Revision (SIR). *The Hindu* also won the "Silver" for "Best in countering disinformation".

"*The Hindu* Explains" newsletter won the bronze in the "best newsletter" category. The newspaper won bronze awards in the categories of "best marketing campaign for a news brand", "best use of audio", and "best reader revenue".

Among other winners, Collective Newsroom bagged the "Gold" for best data visualisation, while Spot On won top honours for best emerging news provider. *The Financial Times* "India Business Briefing" won the "Gold" for the best newsletter, while *Deutsche Welle*'s "Delayland" topped in the "best use of audio" category.

Video honours

In the "best use of video" category, the gold went to *The Daily Star* for "Anatomy of BGB shootings in Rampura", the silver to *Prothom Alo* for "The highway of death: Jatrabari killings", and the bronze to *The Quint* for "Why Indian cities aren't walkable".

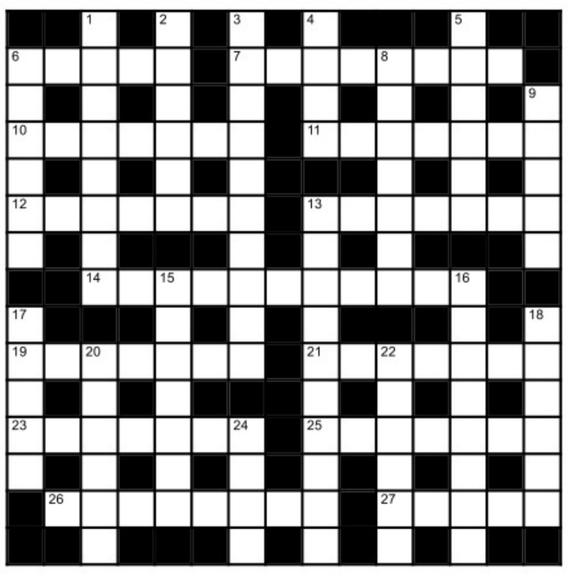
These awards for excellence in digital innovation are presented annually by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA).

TH CROSSWORD + 14781

(set by Arden)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at *https://thehindu.com/crosswords*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

6 Money kept in her custody is returned (5)
7 Talk about bad day - usually they all start being stubborn (8)
10 The French flyer is a rogue (7)
11 Opposing win in a way (7)
12 Little over bearing and cunning (7)
13 Day a senior came back for a pigment (3,4)
14 Unearthed under ocean, perhaps a primitive craft (6,5)
19 Perfect example of pressure on a gas all around (7)
21 Standard location detailed by Johnny-come-lately (7)
23 The billionaire glad to reclaim part of the country (7)
25 Angered in other words (7)
26 Man with idea is mournful (8)
27 One left out to burn (5)

Down

1 A top detective is a junkie (4,4)
2 Setter over weight, carrying on with an Asian flower (6)
3 With Teflon component rotate traffic sign (2,4,4)
4 Some of the old Norse poems added up (4)
5 One over hundred, pronto (2,4)
6 "Band goes over the place" - that's sensational news! (6)
8 Managed to involve staff subject (7)
9 Bossy breakdown analysis (5)
13 I reinspect distribution for the beneficiaries (10)
15 Potty right in for a famous cosmonaut (7)
16 Ginger worried about me coming out (8)
17 Fight over catching river fish (5)
18 Trick used to get uniform breadth and defeat (6)
20 Delight with Royal Salute in the end (6)
22 Stop flipping at the top - it's most uncommon... (6)
24 ...stop short and claim (4)

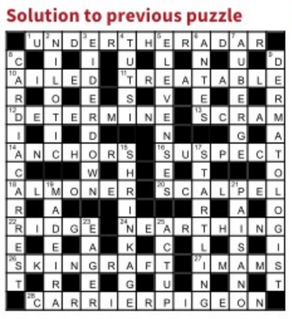
SUDOKU

	3		8		1			
	7			3	4		2	
4		8				3		
				2			1	8
	2		6		7		5	
1	6			9				
		1				9		5
	4		1	6			8	
			7		5		6	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

No.SS6866 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

3	7	4	5	1	9	8	2	6
2	8	5	3	4	6	9	1	7
6	1	9	7	8	2	5	3	4
4	3	2	6	9	7	1	8	5
7	6	1	8	2	5	4	9	3
5	9	8	1	3	4	6	7	2
8	5	6	9	7	3	2	4	1
1	4	3	2	6	8	7	5	9
9	2	7	4	5	1	3	6	8

FAITH

Lord Nrisimha, the saviour

Perumal's manifestation as Nrisimha is a personification of ferociousness. At the same time, Nrisimha is synonymous with supreme majesty, stature and poise, said Damal S Ramakrishnan. He is all pervasive and finds mention in every scripture, ranging from Bhagavatam, Vishnu Puranam, Vishnu Sahasranamam, Tiruppavai and Narayaneeyam among others. Nrisimha's quality is such that it is carried to other manifestations as well. Swami Vedanta Desikan's description of Rama disembarking from the pushpaka vimana sums it up beautifully when he refers to him as Raghava Simha. Similarly, in Tiruppavai, Andal introduces Krishna as *Yasodai ilan singam* (Yasoda's young lion). Both reinforce the profound majesty of Rama and Krishna. Nrisimha bursts from the pillar the minute Prahlada says Hari is present everywhere, at the exact moment of danger in order to protect His devotee. In other words, Nrisimha is ever-ready to spring to the defence of His devotee.

In her missive to Krishna that Rukmini pens and despatches through a sadhu, she entreats His help, but nowhere does she mention Krishna by name, even though she refers to Him in other ways. Rukmini further enters the recipient's name as Nrisimha in Dwaraka. When the sadhu wonders why she is addressing it to Nrisimha when she wants him to deliver it to Krishna, Rukmini's reasoning is splendid: By addressing the receiver as Nrisimha, Rukmini is making it clear it is a cry for help and one needed at the earliest. As Kale Nrisimha, He would rush to the aid of His devotee and prevent her wedding from Sisubalan, who is none other than Hiranyakashipu reborn.

INBRIEF

DRL gets Canada nod for generic Semaglutide injection

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories has received a Notice of Compliance (NOC) from Health Canada for its generic Semaglutide Injection. It has become the first company to receive the market authorisation for generic Semaglutide Injection in Canada, ahead of Health Canada's review target date. The authorisation covers the 2 mg/pen (1.34 mg/mL) and 4 mg/pen (1.34 mg/mL). Canada is recognised as the world's second-largest market for Semaglutide, Dr. Reddy's said, citing IQVIA MAT Q3 2025 numbers. With launch preparations under way, it is well-positioned to bring the "important treatment option available to Canadian patients". Semaglutide is indicated for the once-weekly treatment of adult patients with Type 2 diabetes to improve glycemic control, the company said.

Oil firms selling petrol at ₹14 a litre loss, diesel at ₹18: ICRA

Oil marketing companies (OMCs) are selling petrol and diesel at a loss of ₹14 per litre and ₹18 per litre, respectively, as elevated crude prices outpace capped retail fuel rates, squeezing marketing margins. Besides losses on petrol and diesel, the elevated energy prices post West Asia crisis are likely to leave companies with an under recovery of ₹80,000 crore on cooking gas LPG in the current fiscal, while fertiliser subsidy is projected to rise to ₹2.05 to 2.25 lakh crore. Rating agency ICRA said supply disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz have tightened availability of fuels, fertilisers and chemicals, pushing up prices and increasing cost pressures across downstream industries. Crude prices before the West Asia crisis broke out were around $70-72 a barrel. "The stable pump prices for auto fuels amid elevated crude oil prices are impacting the profitability of the OMCs," said Prashant Vasisht, Senior VP and Co-Group Head, ICRA. PTI

Increased imports buoy natural gas stocks in March

Total natural gas available for sale in India grew 7.8% in March; the gross domestic production of 2,874 MMSCM during the month, as per provisional PPAC data, was 4.9% lower on a YoY basis

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

Amid the looming fuel supply disruptions due to the West Asia conflict, the total natural gas available for sale in India grew 7.8% in March 2026, fuelled by an increase in imports of liquified natural gas (LNG), according to latest government data.

The increase in availability comes despite India's net domestic production of natural gas for sale slipping 4.3% in March 2026, the first month following the start of the West Asia crisis.

Separately, during a press briefing, Mukesh Mangal, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, confirmed to reporters that the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) was looking at how it could resume services to West Asia.

Giant leap: India's imports of LNG jumped 20.5% on a year-on-year basis to 2,888 MMSCM during this period. REUTERS

"Starting shipping services is not like we decide today and start tomorrow, it is a combination of many things like getting cargo, arranging berthing on West Asia ports, transport of cargo from that port to hinterland of different countries," he said.

On India's assessment of the UAE exiting the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its impact on prices, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Petroleum Ministry said "it is too early to comment".

According to provisional data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC), gross domestic production of natural gas was 2,874 million metric standard cubic metre (MMSCM) during the month. This was 4.9% lower on a year-on-year basis.

Natural gas producers use some quantity of the overall gas produced for internal consumption with some quantity is lost during processing.

Net production of natural gas, which is what is sold to consumers in power, fertiliser, city-gas distribution, refinery and petrochemical sectors, during the reported period stood at 2,381 MMSCM, down from 2,489 MMSCM in the year-ago period. This stood at approximately 83% of the gross production in March this year.

India's imports of LNG, on the other hand, jumped 20.5% on a year-on-year basis to 2,888 MMSCM during this period.

Overall, according to the provisional data, the total gas available for consumption, inclusive of both imports and domestic production, stood at 5,726 MMSCM, although PPAC cautions the actual figure could be "much lower" owing to the situation in West Asia.

'India, U.K. need to simplify regulatory mechanisms'

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI

Dame Susan Langley

India and the United Kingdom need to simplify their complex regulatory mechanisms, London's Lady Mayor Dame Susan Langley told *The Hindu*.

The comments are significant on the background of the India-U.K. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) which will be effective soon. During her maiden visit to India, the international Ambassador for the U.K.'s financial and professional services sector, emphasised on the need for both the countries to understand each other's markets more strategically, and discussed the barriers for the rolling out of the FTA.

She lauded India's Aadhaar experiment but added that the U.K. will not walk that path, though it is looking for a universal identification system. "What you have done with Aadhaar is really impressive. But I can't say that we will be following it up," she said. She also spoke of the opportunities for the British insurance companies in India, which is one of the under-insured countries in the world. She drew parallels between London and Mumbai, adding that their financial ecosystems looked similar.

"There is a need to understand each other's regulatory environment," she said, when asked about the consistent issues she hears from the British companies about accessing Indian markets and the other way round. "The thing with regulation is, each year when you review it, you add more to it. You rarely remove anything or make things simpler. Over time, it gets to a stage where it becomes too complex. I think, India and the U.K. have recognised the need. I would not say, deregulate. I would never advocate that. But simplification is a very good word," she said.

Ms. Langley visited New Delhi and Mumbai from April 25 to April 29, where she met industry leaders, government officials and Ministers.

Barriers for FTA

Speaking of the barriers in the success of the long-awaited Free Trade Agreement, she said that the British companies still lacked an understanding of the Indian markets and their potential. "Even with the FTA, we need case studies and real success stories to make the FTA work to encourage people to invest in both directions," she said, emphasising on the need to highlight the success stories from India and the U.K.

Govt. proposes E100 as approved fuel

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued a draft notification proposing to recognise E100 (or 100% ethanol) as an approved automotive fuel, clearing the way for certification and large-scale production of vehicles capable of running entirely on ethanol. The proposed amendments relate to Rule 115, sub-rule (18) of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVR), which governs the recognition and specification of alternative fuels in India.

A key change allows vehicles earlier approved for up to 85% ethanol blends to now be certified for 100% ethanol, paving the way for pure ethanol-powered vehicles rather than just blended fuel options. A senior government official explained that the amendments will allow for "homologation" and type approvals of E-100 powered vehicles by agencies like Automotive Research Association of India, facilitating their roll-out and adoption by consumers.

Homologation is the official certification process ensuring a vehicle, or its components, complies with government technical, safety, and environmental regulations before it can be sold or used on public roads.

Safran, Uni Tritech ally for plane engine parts

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Safran Aircraft Engines, which is into aircraft propulsion systems, has signed a memorandum of understanding with Uni Tritech Pvt. Ltd., a Neterwala Group firm, to make components for the CFM LEAP engine programme.

Under this, Uni Tritech would start producing aluminum investment cast parts for the LEAP-1A and LEAP-1B engines at its facility in Dharwad, Karnataka.

The components will be cast, precisely machined and receive specialised treatment in India, in accordance with the strict quality, safety, and certification standards required for new-generation commercial aircraft engines.

The LEAP engine powers the world's most advanced single-aisle commercial aircraft

"This partnership with Safran Aircraft Engines highlights our expertise in advanced metallurgy and precision engineering, as well as our commitment to supporting global aerospace programmes," said Kuldeep Bhan, group president - global metallurgy, Neterwala Group.

"By manufacturing critical LEAP engine components in India, we are proud to contribute to the growth of a globally competitive aerospace ecosystem," he said.

"Our collaboration with Uni Tritech, our first aluminum foundry partner in India, marks an important step in strengthening the resilience and diversity of our global supply chain," said Dominique Dupuy, VP, purchasing at Safran Aircraft Engines.

Gold shining as investment: WGC

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Demand for the yellow metal in India in the January to March quarter (Q12026) rose 10% year-on-year (YoY) to 150.6 tonne despite high prices.

India's Q12026 gold demand value surged 99% to ₹2,27,530 crore, as per the data released by World Gold Council (WGC).

Jewellery sees dip

However, total jewellery demand in India in Q1 slid 19% to 66.1 tonne. On account of high prices, the value of jewellery demand climbed 47% to ₹99,920 crore YoY.

Total bar and coin demand for Q1 2026 was at 62.3 tonne, up 34%. In value terms, gold bar and coin demand surged 142% to ₹94,130 crore.

Gold ETF

Total gold ETF demand for Q1 2026 was at 19.9 tonne, up 197%. In value terms, the demand skyrocketed 437% to ₹30,000 crore.

Total gold recycled in India in Q1 2026 was 31.2 tonne, up by 20% compared to 26.0 tonnes in Q1 2025, WGC said.

Gold imports surge

Total gold imports in India surged 39% to 196.4 tonne in the quarter from 141.2 tonnes a year ago.

The average quarterly price of an ounce of good in Q12026 was $4,873 in comparison to $2,860 in Q12025. The average quarterly price of 10 gram gold in Q12026 was ₹1,51,105 compared with ₹83,375 crore (without import duty and GST).

"India's gold market in Q1 2026 reflects a continued divergence between volume trends and value growth, shaped by record-high prices and evolving consumer preferences," said Sachin Jain, regional CEO, India, WGC.

A saleswoman places gold jewellery on display inside a showroom in Kolkata.

He said when jewellery demand faced notable headwinds during the quarter, investment demand emerged as a key driver of overall growth.

"This strong momentum highlights increasing investor confidence in gold as a strategic asset, supported by heightened global uncertainties and its role as an effective hedge against inflation and market volatility," he said.

On the future, he said while elevated prices may act as a near-term headwind for jewellery demand, the summer wedding season and regional festivals would provide support, building on the momentum seen during Akshaya Tritiya.

"At the same time, investment demand is likely to remain resilient, with gold continuing to be viewed as a safe-haven asset and an important portfolio diversifier amid ongoing global uncertainties. We estimate full year demand to be in the range of 650-750 tonne," the WGC official stated.

'Consumer demand must to spur green products'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Consumers demanding products and services with lower carbon footprint would be a crucial factor in driving corporates towards adopting more green practices and products, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said on Wednesday.

He added it was also essential for corporates to have economically-viable propositions.

Speaking at the launch of think-tank Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)'s digital analytics platform 'CRAVIS', Mr. Goyal said, "There can be no better way to get more acceptability, more conscious and more action from corporates than consumer demand."

He added, "If we (consumers) value products made with lower carbon emissions and net carbon impact on environment, boardrooms will become more conscious."

Further, he sought to emphasise, notwithstanding the potential intent among corporates to green products and services, it was essential they have an economically-viable proposition.

Look at EBITDA

"At the end of the day, after all the good intention, the corporate is going to look at the EBITDA and profit, that is what the stock market and shareholder are going to recognise. Therefore, we will have to convert each of these opportunities into an economically viable product," he stated, adding the government would also have to go along with the effort.

IN THE COURT OF THE CITY CIVIL AND SESSIONS JUDGE, BENGALURU URBAN (COMMERCIAL COURT) (CCH-83)
Com.O.S. No. 974/2025
Substituted Service of Summons to the Defendant vide order of the Hon'ble LXXXII Additional City Civil and Sessions Judge (CCH-83) dated 17.04.2026

BETWEEN: Anil Kumar Kaya
(Represented by his Power of Attorney holder) ... **PLAINTIFF**

AND

Newbridge Business Centre Private Limited ... **DEFENDANT**

TO THE DEFENDANT
1. New Bridge Business Centre Private Limited
having office at:
555D, 100 Feet Road, HAL II Stage, Indiranagar, Bangalore-560 038
Also at:
No. 777D, 100 Feet Road, HAL II Stage, Indiranagar, Bangalore-560 038
And at:
Mantri Altius, 9th Floor, Cubbon Road, Shivaji Nagar, Bangalore-560001
Represented by its Director
Mr. Revanna Siddaiah Rakesh

Whereas, the present suit has been filed by the above named Plaintiff under Order VII Rules 1 and 2 seeking recovery of INR 6,67,57,999/- towards arrears of rent, along with interest thereon at the rate of 24 per cent per annum from the due dates till the date of the suit together with future interest thereon at the rate of 24 per annum from the date of the suit till the date of payment, from the Defendant. Whereas, on 17.04.2026, the Hon'ble LXXXII Additional City Civil and Sessions Judge, Bengaluru Urban ("Hon'ble Court") directed paper publication to be taken out in respect of the Defendant in a daily newspaper having circulation in the area notifying the said Defendant to appear before the Hon'ble Court.Summons is hereby given to the Defendant to appear before the Hon'ble Court either in person or through Counsel duly instructed or by someone authorized by law, to act for you in the above suit on **05.06.2026**, in case you intend to contest the suit. If you fail to appear, the suit will be dealt with, heard and decided in your absence.
Issued under my hand and the seal of the Hon'ble Court, this the 28th day of April 2026.

SCHEDULE
SCHEDULE 'A' PROPERTY
Portion of Eleventh floor of the Base Building known as Block N1 measuring 25,000 sq.ft. of super built-up area along with 33 car parking spaces in the basement/stilt and surface in Manyata Embassy Business Park constructed on converted land bearing Khata No. 6/30/2, 30/3, 32/1, 32/2, 31/5, carved out of Survey Nos. 30/3 measuring 1 acre 0.5 guntas, 32/1 measuring 1 acre 2.75 guntas, 32/2 measuring 19 guntas, 31/5 measuring 16.25 guntas in all totally measuring 2 acres 38.5 guntas situated at Rachenahalli Village, K.R. Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore, and bounded on:
East by: Land bearing Sy. No. 30/2
West by: Lands bearing Sy. No. 32/1 and 32/2
North by: Remaining Land in Sy. No. 31/5
South by: Lands bearing Sy. No. 32/3 and 30/3

SCHEDULE 'B' PROPERTY
Portion of Eleventh floor of the Base Building known as Block N1 bearing Unit No. 11F-1measuring 10,509 sq.ft. of super built-up area along with14 car parking spaces in the basement/stilt and surface in Manyata Embassy Business Park constructed on converted land bearing Khata No. 6/30/2, 30/3, 32/1, 32/2, 31/5, carved out of Survey Nos. 30/3 measuring 1 acre 0.5 guntas, 32/1 measuring 1 acre 2.75 guntas, 32/2 measuring 19 guntas, 31/5 measuring 16.25 guntas in all totally measuring 2 acres 38.5 guntas situated at Rachenahalli Village, K.R. Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore and bounded on:
East by: Land bearing Sy. No. 30/2
West by: Lands bearing Sy. No. 32/1 and 32/2
North by: Remaining Land in Sy. No. 31/5
South by: Lands bearing Sy. No. 32/3 and 30/3

By Order of the LXXXII Additional City Civil and Sessions Judge Bengaluru Urban
Chief Ministerial Officer of the Court of the City Civil and Sessions Judge Bengaluru
Advocate for Plaintiff:
M/s. King & Partridge, Advocates
No.48, Lavelle Road, Bangalore 560 001

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
(Public Works Department)
Office of the Executive Engineer,
Public Works Department, Division: Yadgir.
GSTIN:29BLR002252F1DR

No.EE/PWD/Divn/YDG/TS-1&2/e-Tender/2026-27/ 231 Dated:29-04-2026

Short Term e-Tender Notification

1) Details of works: On behalf of Governor of Karnataka as per KTPP Amendment 1999-2000 Act 2000 Standard Bid Document KW-4 Karnataka Public Works Department invited item Rate Tender under KPPP Portal in Two Cover System from Eligible Agency/Contractors for following works Under 5054 Appendix-E (Plan) for the year 2025-26 Under Shahapur Taluka-(1)32497/Call-3 and Shorapur Taluka-(1)34893, (2)34952, Total 3 (Three) works Tender Called **2) Amount Put to Tender:** Miminimum Rs 400.00 Lakhs and Maximum Rs.500.00 Lakhs **3) Contractor Eligible Details:** Civil Class-II & Above **4) Tender Procesing Fee and EMD Details**: Tender Fee, EMD & Period as per kppp portal, **5) Last Date & Time for Tender Pre-Bid Meeting:** 05.05.2026 (11.30 hrs Onwards) (For KW-4 Works Only) **6) Last Date & Time for Tender queries/Clarification:** 07.05.2026 (Upto 17.30 hrs) **7) Last Date & Time for Reciept of the tender in e-KPPP portal:**11.05.2026 (Upto 16.00 hrs) **8)Date & Time of Opening of the Tender/Technical Bid:**12.05.2026 (16.30 hrs Onwards) **9) Date & Time of Opening of the Financial Bid:**14.05.2026 (11.30 hrs Onwards) **10) For More Details Contact:** Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Division:Yadgir. **11) Website Address:**https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

NOTE: Any Corrections / Changes will be updated in the kppp Portal only

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
DIP/YDG/41/KSMC&A/2026-27 **PWD Division, Yadgir.**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our client intends to enter into transaction with regard to the lands situated at Bhaktarahalli Village, Doddabelavangala Hobli, Doddaballapur Taluk, Bangalore Rural District, totally measuring 16 Acres 23 Guntas (incl. of 36 Guntas 'B' Kharab) (**'Schedule Property'**), from its respective owners (**'Owners'**) as listed in the Schedule below.

The Owners have represented that they are the sole & absolute owners of their respective lands in the Schedule Property & that the Schedule Property is not the subject matter of any subsisting & valid mortgages, lien or charges in favour of anyone & that there are no litigations disposed/pending &/or any subsisting & valid agreements for sale or the like executed by the Owners in respect of the Schedule Property.

If any person/s have any manner of right to, interest in or claim against the Schedule Property including but not limited to any encumbrance thereon by way of a charge, mortgage or lien or being a party to any Agreement for Sale or the like or any Litigations in respect of the Schedule Property or any part thereof, may, within **15 (fifteen) Days** hereof submit to us such claim together with documentary proof in support thereof, failing which, it shall be presumed that there are no encumbrances, charges or lien or any valid & subsisting Agreements for Sale or the like or any Litigations, or any other claim, right, title or interest in respect of the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Total Extent A	Total Extent G	Boundaries East	Boundaries West	Boundaries North	Boundaries South	Owners
1.	**20 (Old 20/5)**	3 Out of 20A 15G	04	-	-	-	-	Mahendra B. C. S/o. late Channaramaiah
2.	**22/1**	0	02	Sy. No. 20	Sy. No. 22/5	Sy. No. 22/5	Rampura Village Boundary	Govinda Bhoyi
3.	**22/2**	1	02	Sy. No. 22/5	Sy. No. 22/4	Sy. No. 21	Sy. No. 23	B.C.Venkatesh S/o. B.Chikkanna
4.	**22/3**	1	29	Sy. No. 22/4	Sy. No. 24/1	Sy. No. 21	Sy. No. 23	B.C. Narayanaswamy S/o. B. Chikkanna
5.	**22/4**	1	16	Sy. No. 22/2	Sy. No. 22/3	Sy. No. 21	Sy. No. 23	B.C.Venkatesh S/o. B.Chikkanna
6.	**22/5**	4	10	Sy. No. 20	Sy. No. 22/2	Sy. No. 21	Sy Nos. 23, 22/1 & Rampura Village Boundary	(i) B.C.Nagesh S/o. B.Chikkanna (ii) Jayalakshmi.B.C D/o. B.Chikkanna
7.	**23**	1	19	Sy. No. 22/5	Sy. No. 24/1	Sy No. 22/2, 22/3, 22/4 & 22/5	Rampura Village Boundary	B. C.Lakshmamma D/o. Chikkanna
8.	**24/1**	2	20	Sy. No. 22/3	Sy. No. 25	Sy. No. 24/2C	Sy. No. 23	B.C.Mahendra S/o. B.C.Channarayappa
9.	**25**	1	01	Sy. No. 24/1	Sy. No. 26	Sy. No. 31/2	Sy. No. 27	(i) B.C.Nagesh S/o. B.Chikkanna (ii) Jayalakshmi B.C D/o. B.Chikkanna

BANGALORE
DATE: 29th April 2026

SMITHA. R. B, ADVOCATE, KING & PARTRIDGE, ADVOCATES,
NO.48, LAVELLE ROAD, BANGALORE 560 001, Ph No: 080 22212341/42

BERLIN

Merz says relations with Trump good despite spat over Iran war

REUTERS

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said on Wednesday his relationship with U.S. President Donald Trump remained good despite a row between the two men over the Iran war. However, he reiterated his worries over the economic impact of the conflict and said Washington and Berlin were speaking to each other. REUTERS

BEIJING

China to ban drone sales in capital from tomorrow over security fears

AFP

China will ban the sale of drones in Beijing and require users to apply for permission for all flights in the capital under strict regulations that enter force on Friday. Officials have cited public security for the new rules, which also forbid bringing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or their core components into Beijing. AFP

STRASBOURG

EU chief says Kremlin imposing 'digital Iron Curtain' on Russians

AFP

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday accused the Kremlin of cutting Russians off from the internet to hide the worsening economic conditions as sanctions over the Ukraine war bite. In Strasbourg, she told EU lawmakers that "Russians feel that they live behind an Iron Curtain again, this time a digital Iron Curtain." AFP

KYIV

Another Russian oil facility burns a day after Ukraine struck a refinery

AP

Another oil facility deep inside Russia was reportedly on fire on Wednesday as Ukraine's Security Service said it had struck an oil pumping station near the city of Perm. The attack came a day after Ukraine struck the Tuapse oil refinery and terminal on the Black Sea for the third time in less than two weeks. AP

Trump warns Iran better 'get smart soon', accept nuclear deal

Reports suggest U.S. President has decided to reject Tehran's latest proposed deal to reopen Strait of Hormuz; Iranian army spokesperson says 'no trust in America', adds they do not consider the war to be over and have many cards not yet used

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

President Donald Trump warned Tehran on Wednesday that it should "get smart soon" and capitulate to Washington's demands for tight controls on its nuclear programme, as a U.S. naval blockade turned the screws on Iran's economy.

The U.S. could extend its naval blockade of Iran for months more, oil executives were told in a meeting with Trump, an official said, after press reports that he had rejected Iran's latest proposed deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

"Iran can't get their act together... They better get smart soon," Mr. Trump posted on his social media platform, above a mocked-up picture of himself toting a rifle in front of explosions wrecking a desert fortress and the slogan: "No more Mr. Nice Guy!"

In solidarity: People at a rally in support of new Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Mojataba Khamenei in Tehran on Wednesday. AFP

The news that peace talks were still stalled sent oil prices higher once again. At around 1335 GMT, a barrel of Brent crude for June delivery was up 5.16% at $117, its highest level since the fragile ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran came into effect on April 8.

The UN Development Programme, meanwhile, warned that the war, which has sent the price of energy and fertiliser soaring, could plunge more than 30 million people into poverty in 160 countries.

Iran has blockaded the strait since the U.S. and Israel launched the war two months ago, sending shockwaves through the global economy. But its own economy is also suffering. On Wednesday, the Iranian rial fell to historic lows against the dollar.

'No trust in America'

But an Iranian army spokesman told state TV on Tuesday that "we do not consider the war to be over", saying Tehran had "no trust in America".

"We have many cards that we have not yet used... new tools and methods of fighting based on the experiences of the past two wars, which will definitely allow us to respond to the enemy more decisively" should the fighting resume, Amir Akraminia said in an interview. The latest Iranian proposal laid out red lines including on nuclear issues and Hormuz, according to Iran's Fars news agency.

The plan would reportedly see Tehran ease its chokehold on the strait and Washington lift its retaliatory blockade while broader negotiations continue, including over the nuclear programme.

Iranian defence ministry spokesman Reza Talaei-Nik said Washington "must abandon its illegal and irrational demands".

Cost of war

The war against Iran has cost the U.S. military $25 billion since it was launched in late February, acting Pentagon comptroller Jules Hurst told lawmakers on Wednesday.

Lebanon says Israeli strike killed two in southern town

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Smoke rising from an Israeli strike as troops demolish buildings and homes in southern Lebanon on Wednesday. AFP

Lebanon's army said on Wednesday that one of its soldiers was among two people killed in an Israeli strike in the country's south, the latest deadly raid despite a ceasefire in the Israel-Hezbollah war.

"A soldier and his brother were killed in an Israeli strike that targeted them in the town of Khirbet Selm in Bint Jbeil (district) while they were travelling on a motorbike" heading home from the soldier's post, the army statement said.

The raid comes a day after 11 people, including three civil defence personnel, were killed in strikes in the country's south, according to updated health ministry figures, while two army troops were also wounded.

Prime Minister Nawaf Salam has called the strike that killed the civil defence workers a "war crime".

President Joseph Aoun said on Wednesday that authorities were keeping up "contacts to consolidate the ceasefire and stop the demolition of homes in occupied southern villages", according to a statement from his office.

A 10-day truce that began on April 17 and was extended for three weeks was supposed to pause the war between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah during which Israeli troops invaded south Lebanon.

Under the truce, Israel reserves the right to act against "planned, imminent or ongoing attacks".

Its troops are operating inside an Israeli-announced "yellow line", which demarcates a ribbon of Lebanese territory around 10 km deep along the length of the border, where Lebanese have been warned not to return.

Death toll rising

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported Israeli airstrikes on around a dozen locations in south Lebanon on Wednesday and said Israeli troops were also blowing up homes in at least two locations.

The health ministry said a strike on Jibsheet a day earlier killed five people, including two women. The NNA said they were all from the same family.

Israeli strikes in Lebanon have killed at least 53 people since the ceasefire began less than two weeks ago, according to an AFP tally of health ministry and army statements.

Hezbollah lawmaker Hassan Fadlallah vowed on Wednesday that Israeli attempts to "establish a security belt on our land... will be brought down by the sacrifices of the resistance and the steadfastness of our people".

Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the West Asia war on March 2 by firing rockets towards Israel to avenge the U.S.-Israeli killing of Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei.

Russian forces must withdraw from Mali: Tuareg spokesman

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Tuareg rebels want Russian forces to withdraw from "all of Mali", a spokesman for the Azawad Liberation Front (FLA) coalition told AFP on Wednesday, after Islamist insurgents and separatists launched attacks destabilising the country.

At the weekend, jihadists and Tuareg separatists, who have joined forces against the ruling junta and its Russian paramilitary backers, launched a wave of attacks on strategic junta positions, including areas around the capital, Bamako.

The rebels captured the key town of Kidal in the mostly desert north, and Defence Minister Sadio Camara, seen as the mastermind behind the junta's pivot to Russia, was killed in two days of fierce fighting.

"Our objective is for Russia to withdraw permanently from Azawad and beyond, from all of Mali," the spokesman for the FLA coalition, Mohamed El-maouloud Ramadane, told AFP in Paris.

"It supported people who committed serious crimes and massacres," he said.

Russia's defence ministry confirmed this week that paramilitary fighters from the Africa Corps, controlled by the government in Moscow and sent to back up the Malian junta, had been forced to withdraw from Kidal in the north.

Mr. Ramadane said the Russians asked for a secure corridor to withdraw.

U.S. rallies countries against China 'threat'

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

The United States led a group of regional countries in calling China's actions during a dispute over the Panama Canal a "threat," prompting backlash from Beijing on Wednesday.

Washington and Beijing accuse each other of seeking to control the Panama Canal, a vital trade link between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Panama took control of two of the canal's ports previously operated by a Hong Kong-based conglomerate in January.

The U.S. led countries, including Bolivia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Paraguay, and Trinidad and Tobago, on Tuesday in calling China's actions "a blatant attempt to politicize maritime trade and infringe on the sovereignty of the nations of our hemisphere".

China's foreign ministry slammed the statement as a "smear" on Wednesday.

"It is the United States that is politicizing and over-securitizing the port issue," ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a news briefing.

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Information Technology Department
Central Office: 763, ANNA SALAI, CHENNAI-600002

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King Charles to stress U.K.-U.S. cultural, trade ties in New York amid recent rift

Agence France-Presse
NEW YORK

King Charles III will use his New York trip on Wednesday to showcase cultural and economic ties between Britain and the United States at a time when the "special relationship" is under strain.

It is the third day of a four-day state visit, clouded by tensions over the Iran war, that began in Washington with President Donald Trump warmly greeting the monarch and his wife Queen Camilla.

In New York, the king and the queen laid a bouquet of flowers at the 9/11 memorial to mark 25 years since the terror attacks by al Qaeda that killed nearly 3,000 people.

"This atrocity was a defining moment for America and your pain and shock were felt around the whole world," Charles told the U.S. Congress on Tuesday.

U.S. President Donald Trump greets Britain's King Charles III at the South Portico of the White House for a state dinner on Tuesday. AP

"We stood with you then. And we stand with you now in solemn remembrance of a day that shall never be forgotten," he said while calling for unity among Western powers.

After meeting 9/11 first responders and victims' families, Mr. Charles, who is passionate about gardening and the environment, will visit an urban sustainable farming project providing mentorship to youth and tackling hunger.

Meanwhile, Ms. Camilla will mark the 100th birthday of fictional teddy bear Winnie the Pooh at the New York Public Library, where she is expected to gift a specially made toy of the character Roo.

Later, Mr. Charles will mingle with business leaders, including investors and entrepreneurs, at an event highlighting the transatlantic economic ties.

Mr. Trump this month threatened to backtrack on a trade agreement with the U.K. that limits the impact U.S. tariffs, as he criticised Britain's lack of support over the Iran war.

Charles's final engagement will celebrate the work of his youth charity, The King's Trust, at a reception that will also spotlight British and American cultural industries.

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, संभाग अजमेर
क्रमांकः अमुअ/अज./तक./एफ-2(30ए)निविदा/डी-245 दिनांकः 23.04.2026
निविदा सूचना संख्या 04 वर्ष 2026-2027
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2	2026_KMML_848750_1	Supply of Polypropylene/HDPE Product Bags
3	2026_KMML_849025_1	Supply of Chicken Meat

Chavara 30.04.2026 Sd/- Managing Director for The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd

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EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT

We don't talk to our players about being fearless: RCB's Flower

VIJAY SONEJI

We've heard the fearless tag used quite often. I don't really buy into that. Fear is a very common and normal human emotion. We don't talk to our players about being fearless. We rather chat with them about recognising those feelings and dealing with them well — RCB head coach Andy Flower.

ENIGMATIC

Kohli is someone who can win a game on his own: GT's Parthiv

FILE PHOTO: VIJAY SONEJI

I am trying to think when he was not in form. He has always been in form. He's been a great player for not just RCB but for India. He is someone who can win a game on his own and we would definitely try and get him out as early as possible — GT assistant coach Parthiv Patel on Virat Kohli.

RUNS GALORE

No target is beyond reach this season: Gavaskar on IPL run-fest

R.V. MOORTHY

Sunil Gavaskar highlighted the growing trend of high-scoring run chases in IPL 2026. "Once one team does that [chase 260-plus], others start believing they can do it as well... and that's exactly what we're seeing. This shows how strongly teams believe that no target, even 220 or 240, is beyond reach," Gavaskar told *JioStar*.

BELLIGERENT

Suryavanshi the fastest to reach 400 runs in an IPL season

R.V. MOORTHY

RR opener Vaibhav Suryavanshi became the fastest to reach 400 runs in terms of balls in a single IPL season, breaching the mark in just 167 balls. The opener achieved this feat with his 16-ball 43 against PBKS in New Chandigarh on Tuesday. The 15-year-old broke Andre Russell's record (188 deliveries in 2019).

Titans seek home comfort against Royal Challengers

IPL-19

N. Sudarshan
AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans will have a second crack at Royal Challengers Bengaluru in less than a week, at the Narendra Modi Stadium here on Thursday.

And this time, the Titans will hope for a reversal in fortunes after having lost the previous encounter by five wickets as RCB chased 206 with ease.

Shubman Gill & Co. come into the contest after a thumping eight-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings that averted a third straight loss. It was fashioned by a fine bowling effort, led by Kagiso Rabada (three for 25), and some solid batting.

It is, however, a fact that GT is heavily dependent on its top-three of B. Sai Sudharsan, Gill and Jos Buttler, who bat a lion's share of the overs.

There is no mistaking their quality, but they have so far proved to be more accumulators than ransackers.

The line-up is like a simmering volcano that threatens to erupt but doesn't follow through on the promise. GT's highest total this season is 210; every other side, apart from Lucknow Super Giants, has scored more.

Against RCB, a team that pursues totals in the vicinity of 200 like it's child's play, GT can ill-afford to bide its time. Even without Phil Salt, who missed the last two games, the defending champion strikes the same fear, for it has the equally marauding Jacob Bethell.

Time to fire: Titans' Washington will be keen to make his presence felt. VIJAY SONEJI

And versus Delhi Capitals most recently, the RCB bowlers showed what devastation they can cause, dismissing Axar Patel's men for a paltry 75.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood, 36 and 35 respectively, scalped seven wickets between them and gave away just 17 runs. Ageing - in sporting terms - is generally associated with physical decline and a slight dulling of the senses, but not for these two.

However, as the table-topping Punjab Kings found out in its six-wicket reverse to Rajasthan Royals on Tuesday, momentum has limited currency in T20 cricket. Can RCB prove otherwise?

Today's match

GUJARAT TITANS vs. RCB

Ahmedabad, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 7
GT 3 | RCB 4

PREVIOUS MEETING
RCB won by **five wickets**, 2026

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIOHOTSTAR

RCB has an all-weather attack, reckons head coach Flower

N. Sudarshan
AHMEDABAD

Tone-setting batting performances in the PowerPlay are non-negotiable to success in T20 cricket. But Royal Challengers Bengaluru also excel in something else - taking bucketloads of wickets in the first six overs to peg its opponents back.

In the previous match, RCB had Delhi Capitals at eight for six in 3.5 overs, with Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood wreaking havoc.

"We've been very good at taking PowerPlay wickets, and we did that well last season also," said head coach Andy Flower, ahead of the encounter against Gujarat Titans.

"[Against DC], things came together so quickly and so well that the game was over in the blink of an eye. It was great to watch those two greats, Bhuvi and Hazlewood, bowl."

Thursday's contest, in Flower's own words, will be on a surface "that plays well". But the former Zimbabwe captain said that RCB had an all-weather attack.

"We're playing on a 75% red-soil pitch. It's the same that we played the final on last year. But we're comfortable with whatever conditions are put in front of us."

Flower also stated that it was important to forget that RCB had six wins in eight games and start afresh. "It's really important that philosophically you don't try to hold on to stuff. It's better to embrace the vagaries and the unpredictability of the game."

GT, too, has a capable set of bowlers. Assistant coach Parthiv Patel opined that the pitch wouldn't matter. "We're well rounded with our bowling options," Parthiv said.

"We had Manav Suthar bowl. There is the option of Washington Sundar, and there's Rashid Khan. We've seven bowlers [along with Mohammed Siraj, Kagiso Rabada, Jason Holder, Prasidh Krishna/Arshad Khan] who can bowl four overs each. It's not like we have to make do with part-time bowlers".

Points table

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Punjab Kings	8	6	1	1	13	1.043
Royal Challengers	8	6	2	0	12	1.919
Sunrisers Hyderabad	9	6	3	0	12	0.832
Rajasthan Royals	9	6	3	0	12	0.617
Gujarat Titans	8	4	4	0	8	-0.475
Chennai Super Kings	8	3	5	0	6	-0.121
Delhi Capitals	8	3	5	0	6	-1.060
Kolkata Knight Riders	8	2	5	1	5	-0.751
Mumbai Indians	8	2	6	0	4	-0.784
Lucknow Super Giants	8	2	6	0	4	-1.106

TraviShek, Klaasen run riot as SRH bags fifth successive win

Head and Abhishek provide the perfect start before the middle-order batter takes Sunrisers home with ease in a mammoth 244-run chase; Rickelton's maiden century goes in vain as MI suffers its sixth defeat of the season

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

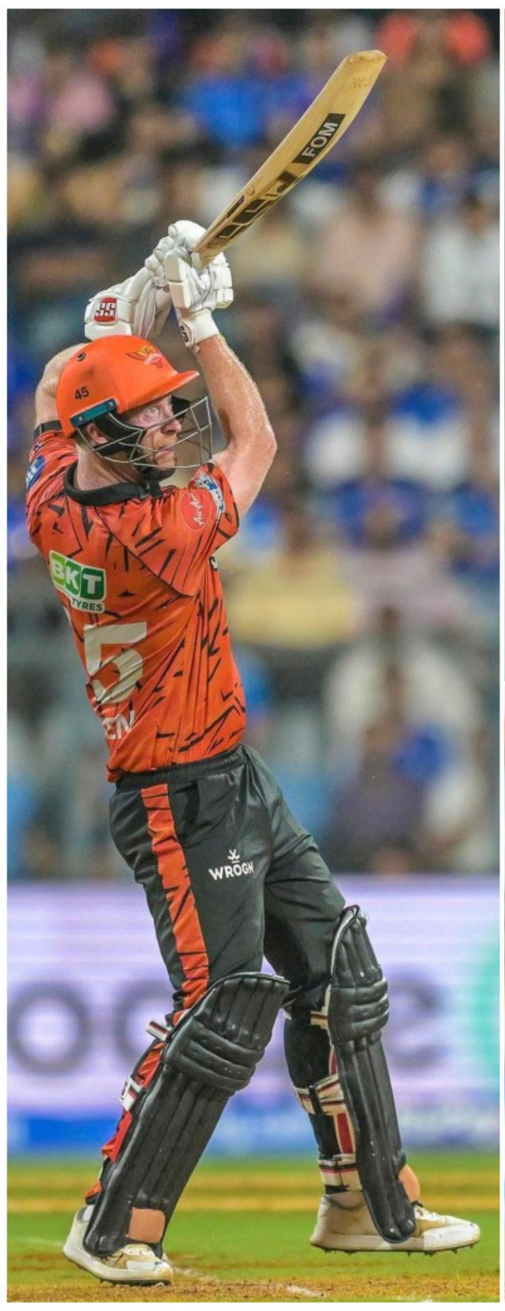
Ryan Rickelton (123 n.o., 55b, 10x4, 8x6) produced his maiden IPL century as Mumbai Indians piled up 243 for five against Sunrisers Hyderabad, its highest total so far this IPL season. It still wasn't enough at the Wankhede Stadium here on Wednesday.

In conditions tailor-made for batting, Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma fired in tandem for the first time this campaign, setting up a chase during which the scoring rate barely dipped below two runs a ball. Heinrich Klaasen ensured there were no late jitters, sealing a commanding win.

The result left MI – with its sixth loss in eight games – on the brink of being the first team to be ousted from the playoff race, while SRH continued its surge with its fifth consecutive win.

The mammoth chase was a statement. Head shrugged off a quiet tournament to go on the offensive, while Abhishek extended his prolific run. Their 92-run PowerPlay effort during a 129-run stand all but sealed the contest. The Mumbai outfit's missed opportunities – a dropped catch by Naman Dhir and an unappealed edge off Trent Boult in the third over – only compounded their woes.

Though spinner A.M. Ghazanfar struck off successive deliveries in the ninth over, removing Abhishek and Ishan Kishan, Klaasen's controlled aggression made sure SRH cruised home with eight balls to spare.



Having a blast: Klaasen and Head put on an exhibition after Rickelton lit up the Wankhede Stadium. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Immediate impact

Earlier, Rickelton, drafted in for the injured Quinton de Kock, made an immediate impact. He raced to a 23-ball fifty and later brought up his century off 44 deliveries – the third by a MI batter this season. Alongside Will Jacks, he powered the host to 78 without loss in the PowerPlay, the pair adding 93 for the opening wicket.

While Nitish Kumar dismissed Jacks with his first delivery and Suryakumar Yadav fell cheaply to a short ball from Eshan Malinga, Rickelton maintained the tempo. A brisk 55-run partnership with Naman kept the runs flowing, and the southpaw's knock was marked by clean hitting, the standout being a straight drive off Pat Cummins.

Hardik Pandya's burst of 31 off 15 balls meant MI crossed the 200-run mark for the third time this season.

SRH's inexperienced pace duo of Praful Hinge and Sakib Hussain, along with left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey, were taken apart. However, the last four overs saw Sunrisers conceding only 41 runs to pull things back a little. The late fightback proved invaluable as SRH produced the highest successful IPL chase against MI.

SCOREBOARD

MUMBAI INDIANS

Will Jacks c Kishan b Nitish Kumar 46 *(22b, 5x4, 3x6)*, Ryan Rickelton (not out) 123 *(55b, 10x4, 8x6)*, Suryakumar Yadav c Abhishek b Malinga 5 *(5b, 1x4)*, Naman Dhir c Harsh b Praful 22 *(17b, 3x4)*, Hardik Pandya c Klaasen b Sakib 31 *(15b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Tilak Varma c Klaasen b Praful 7 *(5b, 1x6)*, Robin Minz (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (lb-1, w-7): 8; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 243.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-93 (Jacks, 7.1 overs), 2-110 (Suryakumar, 8.3), 3-165 (Naman, 13.4), 4-221 (Hardik, 18.1), 5-232 (Tilak, 19.3).

SUNRISERS BOWLING

Cummins 4-0-39-0, Praful 4-0-54-2, Malinga 4-0-29-1, Harsh 3-0-50-0, Sakib 3-0-39-1, Nitish Kumar 2-0-31-1.

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

Abhishek Sharma c Boult b Ghazanfar 45 *(24b, 4x4, 3x6)*, Travis Head c Jacks b Hardik 76 *(30b, 4x4, 8x6)*, Ishan Kishan b Ghazanfar 0 *(1b)*, Heinrich Klaasen (not out) 65 *(30b, 7x4, 4x6)*, Nitish Kumar c Suryakumar b Boult 21 *(17b, 3x4)*, Salil Arora (not out) 30 *(10b, 2x4, 3x6)*; Extras (lb-4, w-8): 12; Total (for four wkts. in 18.4 overs): 249.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-129 (Abhishek, 8.4), 2-129 (Kishan, 8.5), 3-133 (Head, 9.4), 4-213 (Nitish Kumar, 16.2).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING

Boult 4-0-41-1, Bumrah 4-0-54-0, Jacks 1-0-19-0, Ghazanfar 4-0-51-2, Ashwani 2-0-41-0, Hardik 3.4-0-39-1.

Toss: MI; **PoM:** Klaasen.

Sunrisers won by six wickets with eight balls to spare.

Next assignment

MI: May 2 vs. CSK Chennai, 7.30 p.m.

SRH: May 3 vs. KKR Hyderabad, 3.30 p.m.

India goes down to China

THOMAS & UBER CUP

Press Trust of India
HORSENS (DENMARK)

India went down 2-3 to China in its final Group A tie of the Thomas Cup Finals, despite fighting comeback wins from Ayush Shetty and H.S. Prannoy here on Wednesday.

"I think I really enjoyed that. It was really good. It's my first Thomas Cup. The goal was to win. But yeah, it was two close games. But happy to get the point for the team," said Ayush.

"The *josh* is really high. We really believe that we can go all the way."

India, which finished second in the group, is likely to face 2014 winner Japan in the quarterfinals.

The results:

China bt India 3-2 (Li Shi Feng bt Lakshya Sen 21-19, 8-21, 21-12; Liang Wei Keng & Wang Chang bt Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty 21-13, 13-21, 26-24; Weng Hong Yang lost to Ayush Shetty 21-17, 13-21, 15-21; He Ji Ting & Ren Xiang Yu bt Hariharan Amsakarunan & M.R. Arjun 21-17, 21-13; Lu Guang Zu lost to H.S Prannoy 22-20, 19-21, 11-21).

Confident: Ayush believes the team can go all the way. FILE PHOTO

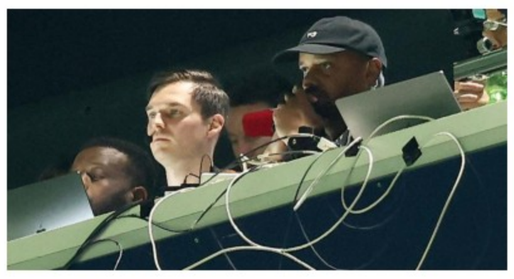
INBRIEF

Punjab FC defends AIFF Elite Youth League title

Three second-half goals within 10 minutes saw Punjab FC successfully defend its AIFF Elite Youth League title, securing a 3-0 victory over Zinc Football Academy in the final at Garhshankar on Tuesday. Karish Soram opened the scoring in the 69th minute while Vishal Yadav doubled the advantage in the 70th. Thongram Rishikanta Singh scored the final goal in the 79th minute.

Harika claims 69kg gold in C'wealth junior weightlifting

Bellana Harika, with a total effort of 197kg (86kg+111kg) won the 69kg gold at the Commonwealth youth and junior weighlifting championships in Apia, Samoa, on Wednesday. Karangi Tharangini 179kg (79kg+100kg) and Bhumika Mohite 195kg (109kg+86kg) won silver in the 63kg events. In Universal Cup, Abhishek Nipane clinched the 88kg silver with a total effort of 324kg (140kg+184kg). Indian lifters had won four golds on the second day of competitions.



No fun watching from the stands, says Kompany

Vincent Kompany might have been the only spectator in the Parc des Princes who didn't enjoy watching the Champions League semifinal game between his Bayern Munich team and PSG. "It's no fun," Kompany said. "I can't take decisions 80 metres away." Kompany said.

Sri Lanka government to take over SLC administration

The Sri Lanka government on Wednesday decided to take over the administration of the country's cricket board after the resignation of its president Shammi Silva and the executive committee. Sri Lanka Cricket chief Silva and other office-bearers stepped down on Tuesday after the Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake negotiated a peaceful exit for them following mounting allegations of financial irregularities. An interim committee will be appointed shortly to find solutions.

Second Bangladesh-NZ T20I washed out

The second T20 between Bangladesh and New Zealand was washed out due to persistent rain in Chattogram on Wednesday. The match was called off without a ball being bowled. Bangladesh leads the three-match series 1-0 following a six-wicket win in the first game. The series final is on Saturday in Mirpur.

28-day Bengaluru summer racing season from May 1

About 634 horses, including nine outstation, will take part in the 28-day Bengaluru summer season that will run from May 1 to July 31. Briefing the press on Wednesday, L. Shivashankar, chairman & senior steward of the Bangalore Turf Club, said total prize money, including trophies, of ₹20.35 crore is estimated to be paid during the summer meeting and it would be approximately ₹21.53 crore including divisions. Zavaray S. Poonawalla and the Bangalore Turf Club Ltd. will jointly sponsor the four classic races while Wayne Wood has been appointed as chief stipendiary steward.

Board of Appeal: Vivek G. Ubhayakar (chairman), Y. Jagannath, K. Jayaram, Rajan Chona, Ritesh Kumar Singh IAS, Satish N. Gowda and Seemant Kumar Singh IPS.

LIVE TELECAST

IFL: Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 6.30 p.m.

IPL: Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.

Europa League: Sony Sports Ten 1, 2 & LIV, 12.30 a.m. (Friday)

Conference League: Sony Sports Ten 3, 5 & LIV, 12.30 a.m. (Friday)

PSG gets its nose in front after epic see-saw battle with Bayern

Kvaratskhelia and Dembele score twice each as the French powerhouse shades a nine-goal thriller against the German champion; Neves also gets his name on the scoresheet while Kane, Olise, Upamecano, Diaz strike for the Bavarians

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Goal glut: Kvaratskhelia, second right, scores PSG's opener against Bayern. AP

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Ousmane Dembele scored twice each as Paris Saint-Germain beat Bayern Munich 5-4 in an epic first leg of their Champions League semifinal on Tuesday, an extraordinary encounter becoming the highest-scoring match ever at this stage of the competition.

The first half alone was crazy, with Harry Kane giving Bayern the lead from a penalty only for Kvaratskhelia to equalise before Joao Neves headed the hosts in front at an enthralled Parc des Princes.

Michael Olise made it 2-2, but a Dembele penalty in first-half stoppage time had the reigning champion back ahead at the interval.

Kvaratskhelia, surely the standout player in this season's Champions League, and Dembele both then scored again to have PSG seemingly out of sight, only for Dayot Upamecano to pull one back before Luis Diaz made it 5-4.

An unforgettable game – perhaps better even than last season's semifinal between Inter Milan and Barcelona – leaves the tie between the continent's two best teams of the moment wonderfully poised for next Wednesday's return at the Allianz Arena, with a place in the final in Budapest on May 30 on the line.

Luis Enrique's Parisians will be returning to Munich – scene of their 5-0 win over Inter in last year's final – with the advantage, but Bayern will be confident it can overturn the narrow deficit at home.

The French champion is seeking to become just the second side in the modern Champions League era to retain the trophy, while the German champion is hoping to reach the final for the first time since 2020, when it defeated PSG to lift the trophy for the sixth time.

The result (semifinal, first leg):
Paris Saint-Germain 5 (Kvaratskhelia 24, 56, Neves 33, Dembele 45+5-pen, 58) bt Bayern Munich 4 (Kane 17-pen, Olise 41, Upamecano 65, Diaz 68).

I am trying to find a solution: Shakib still hopeful of returning to Bangladesh side

Shayan Acharya
MUMBAI

Shakib. FILE PHOTO

Shakib Al Hasan has been away from international cricket for nearly a couple of years, but the former Bangladesh captain remains optimistic about a return to the national side despite ongoing uncertainty surrounding his future.

Speaking to *The Hindu* on Wednesday, Shakib acknowledged the unpredictability of the situation back home while keeping his hopes alive.

"The situation in Bangladesh can change all of a sudden. You never know what happens tomorrow, so that's why I'm still hopeful," Shakib said.

While maintaining a calm outlook, he admitted that his comeback was not entirely in his hands. "I don't think too much about what will happen. Every day, I'm trying to move forward in a new way. As far as making it back to the Bangladesh team is concerned, I don't think it's in my control. But, I'm trying to find a solution," Shakib, whose last Test match was against India in Kanpur in 2024, explained.

In the city for the jersey launch of the EUT20 Belgium, Shakib also shed light on his recent interaction with his long-time teammate and friend, Tamim Iqbal, who is now serving as the interim president of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB). Despite their conversation, there has been no progress regarding his return.

The veteran all-rounder did not hold back while criticising both the BCB and the previous interim government over the team's absence from the T20 World Cup in India earlier this year, a decision taken over security concerns.

Bad decision

"It was a very bad decision from the then government, and at the same time, the BCB, too, played along, taking a strong stance. And, in the end, the players suffered," he said.

"If the BCB had an issue with the BCCI over certain issues, they should have sorted it out, rather than burning the bridge with the ICC. That was terrible".

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Triumphant: Rail Wheel Factory SA that won the KSCA Group II, Division I.

Rail Wheel Factory is the champion

Rail Wheel Factory SA defeated Canara Bank in the final to emerge as KSCA Group II, Division I champion here.

The scores:

Final: Rail Wheel Factory SA 182/7 in 20 overs (E.J. Jasper 93 n.o., C.K. Akshay 43) bt Canara Bank 132 in 19.1 overs (Krishav Somasundar 56).

Easy win for Palar SC

Palar SC cruised past Vijaya CC by nine wickets in the KSCA G. Kasturirangan Memorial trophy here.

The scores:

Vijaya CC 142/5 in 20 overs (K.A. Vijay 54) lost to Palar SC 143/1 in 13.3 overs (Ritesh Bhatkal 69, Sudhanwa Kulkarni 40 n.o.).

South End SC 156/6 in 16 overs (B.K. Shashank 41) bt Young Lions Club 145/9 in 16 overs (Dheeraj Kumar Yadav 40) (overs reduced due to rain).

Minerva CC 181/7 in 20 overs (K.N. Anish 66, Arush Jain 44) lost to Mount Joy CC 182/9 in 20 overs (Amogh Shetty 49, Kushal Gouda 4/25).

The Bangalore Cricketers 164/6 in 20 overs (Saurav Samant 82) lost to Bangalore United CC (1) 169/4 in 18.2 overs (Akash Shetty 44).

Herons CC 191/6 in 20 overs (Prajwal Pavan 43, Sanjay Ashwin 42, Dheeraj Mohan 45 n.o.) lost to Rajajinagar Cricketers 191/7 in 19.2 overs (by 7 runs via VJD method).

Social Cricketers 105 in 14.4 overs (Ronak Yelwal 4/5) lost to Friends Union CC (1) 109/5 in 14.4 overs (Sidharth Akhil 41).

Cambridge CC 229/4 in 20 overs (R. Suhas 85, Shubhang Hegde 90) bt Whirlwind Cricketers 146/6 in 20 overs (Pranav Raj 45).

Jayanagar Cricketers 191/8 in 20 overs (S. Chaitanya 66, Sourab Muttur 50) bt Dooravani Cricketers (1) 169/7 in 20.0 overs (Aarav Shriyan 45).

New Zealand names star trio for Women's T20 WC defence

Agence France-Presse
WELLINGTON

One last time: Tahuhu, Bates and Devine are on their "final mission" to defend the title. FILE PHOTO

Retiring New Zealand cricket greats Sophie Devine, Suzie Bates and Lea Tahuhu were named on Wednesday in the White Ferns' Women's T20 World Cup squad for their "final mission" of defending the title.

New Zealand will play the West Indies, Sri Lanka, Ireland, Scotland and England in its group.

The 15-member squad is led by star all-rounder Amelia Kerr and features 10 players who won the title in Dubai in 2024, beating South Africa in the final.

Devine, Bates and Tahuhu had all announced they would retire after the World Cup, which takes place in England and Wales in June-July.

Sciver-Brunt to lead

All-rounder Nat Sciver-Brunt will lead the 15-member England squad in the upcoming 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup, the ECB announced on Tuesday. The same England squad led by Sciver-Brunt will also feature in the preceding series against India and New Zealand in May-June. This will be Sciver-Brunt's seventh appearance at the global T20 event.

Sciver-Brunt.
FILE PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR

The India women's team will tour England for three T20Is and a one-off Test at Lord's. The T20Is are scheduled for late May/early June, while the Test match runs from July 10 to 13, marking 50 years since the first England women's match at the hallowed venue.

The squads:

New Zealand: Amelia Kerr (Capt.), Suzie Bates, Sophie Devine, Flora Devonshire, Izzy Gaze, Maddy Green, Brooke Halliday, Bree Illing, Polly Inglis, Jess Kerr, Rosemary Mair, Nensi Patel, Georgia Plimmer, Izzy Sharp and Lea Tahuhu.

England: Nat Sciver-Brunt (Capt.), Lauren Bell, Alice Capsey, Tilly Corteen-Coleman, Charlie Dean, Sophia Dunkley, Sophie Ecclestone, Lauren Filer, Dani Gibson, Amy Jones, Freya Kemp, Heather Knight, Linsey Smith, Issy Wong and Danni Wyatt-Hodge.

Vijay Kumar passes away

GOLF

Sports Bureau
HYDERABAD

Veteran Indian golfer Vijay Kumar passed away in his hometown of Lucknow, following a heart attack on Wednesday. He was 57.

A winner of the 2002 Indian Open and a four-time Order of Merit champion, Vijay was widely regarded as one of the most accomplished and respected figures in Indian professional golf. His victory at the 2002 Indian Open remains one of the defining moments in Indian golf history.

Vijay with the 2002 Indian Open trophy. FILE PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN

Vijay is among a select group of just nine Indian golfers to have claimed the prestigious title. He also represented India at the Alfred Dunhill Cup in 1999 at St. Andrew's.

Known for his exceptional skill, consistency, competitive spirit, and exemplary sportsmanship, Vijay inspired generations of golfers and played a significant role in shaping the sport's growth in India.

Kapil Dev, President, Professional Golf Tour of India, expressed his condolences.

"Vijay Kumar was one of the true stalwarts of Indian golf. His achievements, humility, and dedication to the sport made him a role model for generations. His passing is a great loss to Indian golf, and we extend our heartfelt sympathies to his family and loved ones."

'Red card for players covering mouths in confrontation'

FOOTBALL

Agence France-Presse
VANCOUVER

World Cup players who cover their mouths during confrontations with opponents will face a red card as part of a new initiative aimed at combating racism, FIFA said on Tuesday, following a meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB).

"At the discretion of the competition organiser, any player covering their mouth in a confrontational situation with an opponent may be sanctioned with a red card," FIFA said.

The new rule follows controversy earlier this year when Benfica winger Gianluca Prestianni was accused of racially abusing Real Madrid star Vinicius Junior during a Champions League game in February.

In another law announced on Tuesday, to be enforced at the World Cup, FIFA added that red cards would also be introduced for players leaving the field of play in protest at a referee's decision.